No. G 280.62
The Public Library of the City of Boston.
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THE QUESTION MARK

Volume II

1947

Published by
The Boston Public Library Professional Staff Association
Boston, Massachusetts

Rare Bk

B.P.L. Professional Staff Association
Sept. 24, 1954

THE QUESTION MARK

Published by the Boston Public Library Professional Staff Association

Vol. II January 1947 No. 1

EDITOR'S CORNER

On January 18 the Staff Association's second business meeting for the election of officers will take place.

Less than a year ago the Association was launched--in a mixture of hope, misgiving, encouragement, derision, and a cheerful willingness to "try anything once" which at least served the practical purpose of getting the new enterprise afloat. It has had more success than many critics predicted. For the first time in years the whole staff has had social evenings together, with interesting programs, and a pleasant chance to talk things over afterward. The previous gap between Branches and Central has been bridged by these meetings, as well as by the fact that both groups are represented on the Executive Board and on the various committees.

But the Association was not founded simply as a social club. It should be more than that; how much more, depends entirely on its members. Constructive corporate action is rooted in the individual's sense of responsibility. This alone can make a professional group elastic enough to admit all types of opinion, unified enough to agree on essentials, and above all convinced enough to defend the best of its aims when it feels that to be necessary.

The Staff Association is not the UN, and we do not pretend that our affairs are of universal importance. But they are, nevertheless, our affairs. We should like to see the coming year clear away some of the bitterness and defeatism that have vexed the Library during 1946. The Association is on its feet; it can walk ahead and grow to maturity if its members will make it--first, by taking the trouble to vote next Saturday; later, by showing active interest in its progress.

ELECTION MEETING

The annual business meeting for the election of officers will be held on Saturday, January 18, at 9 a.m. in the Lecture Hall.

After the transaction of business balloting will continue until 2.15 p.m. in order to allow members from the Branch Libraries or those on duty at Central to vote.

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TO THE LIBRARY STAFF

The Trustees and the Director wish a Happy New Year to all members of the library staff. May it be for all of us a rich and fruitful year of activity on behalf of the Library and the citizens whom it serves.

MILTON E. LORD, Director

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TREASURE CHESTS

The many staff members who contributed to the Treasure Chests for French school children will be glad to know that the boxes were shipped to Bordeaux in December. One, containing thirty-eight volumes, went to the School for Boys; the other, with thirty volumes, to the School for Girls. Professor Guinard's children are among the students at these schools.

*

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Mr. F. C. Francis, Secretary of the British Museum, was a recent visitor in the Library.

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75TH ANNIVERSARY AT EAST BOSTON

Open house at the East Boston Branch on Thursday, December 5, climaxed the celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the opening of the first municipally supported branch library in the United States.

About three hundred people viewed the exhibit of old pictures, maps of the island, costumes, and interesting historical material on display in the Adult Room, and attended the program held in the Lecture Hall at eight in the evening. Miss Dorothy F. Nourse, Branch Librarian, welcomed the guests and announced the twelve winners from East Boston high and junior high schools in the essay contest on "What East Boston Branch Library Means to the Community." A pageant, "An East Boston Miniature," introduced typical folk songs and dances of the many nationalities of the district, sung by the girls from Trinity Neighborhood House and danced by girls from Central Square Center Settlement House. Lantern slides of Old East Boston were shown by Mr. George Duncan. a former resident.

The ceremony of cutting the large birthday cake in the Children's Room after the program was the highlight of the evening. Mrs. Ada A. Andelman, supervisor in the Circulation Division, cut the first slice in honor of Miss Lillian A. Bickford, assistant in the Library for fifty-one years. The second slice was cut by Miss Theodora B. Scoff, former Branch Librarian, in honor of Mrs. Laura Cross Fletcher, the oldest living Branch Librarian of East Boston. Punch and home-made cookies were served by the staff, library aides from the Barnes School, and hostesses from the community. Mr. Francis B. Masterson, Library Trustee, was an honored guest.

Ladies from the East Boston Woman's Club, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Home Club were guests at a coffee party held in the Adult Room Tuesday morning, December 3. Miss Edith Guerrier, Supervisor of Branch Libraries Emeritus, presided at the coffee urn, which was loaned by the local chapter of the D.A.R. "Old Days and Old Ways in East Boston," childhood memories of Miss Helen Stevenson, and several delightful poems by Miss Frankie Sullivan comprised the program.

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FIRE FACTS

Mr. John W. J. Tully, in charge of fire control, asked us to print a few warning notes:

Every day there are 1800 fires--1000 home fires--28 deaths by fire--130 store fires--100 factory fires--7 church fires --7 school fires--and 3 hospital fires. Every year fire kills 10,000 people, more than half of them women and children.

Early this year, in Elizabeth, N. J., a housewife had a fine idea for saving money. She stuffed her husband's suits into her new electric washer, filled it with gasoline, and turned the switch. The house was literally blown off the lot.

If we are really serious about cutting down America's fire losses, the best place to start it is in our own homes and places of business. Almost overnight we could save millions of dollars' worth of property and hundreds of lives --merely by following a few simple rules of common sense and good housekeeping. For instance, one pint of gasoline can fill a house with 200 cubic feet of explosive air--and the spark from a cat's fur is enough to set it off.

*

FROM THE PATENT ROOM

The Patent Room has been having more than its share of strange inquiries lately. About a month ago a lady came to the desk and asked, "Where is my husband?" The reference assistant summoned up his courage and admitted that he didn't know. "He should be here," the little lady continued. "He's looking for rat traps."

Just then the missing husband came through the door, and the staff wondered how she could lose a man that size. He was looking for rat traps--in patent form. A search through the patent indices disclosed quite a few, and the couple left happily an hour later. (The lady left on the desk a pamphlet on how to tell fortunes with playing cards; this is still in the Patent Room and available for consultation.)

Two weeks later the husband was back. "You're the fellow I want," he remarked, dragging the assistant away from the typewriter. From under his coat he proudly brought forth his newly-invented rat trap, with a Woolworth rat in it. Grandly he folded the coat again about himself and Mr. Rodent and--we suppose--went home, to wait for that path to be beaten to his door.

Another couple have been using the telephone directories to build up a business which they developed themselves.

It seems the man's brother is a small-town undertaker and had been having difficulty in getting the proper type of necktie for his profession. In desperation he asked our client to try the stores in Boston. He located some ties, and also a means of making money. It occurred to him that other morticians might be having similar troubles. So he and his wife rounded up all the suitable neckwear they could find, packaged them, and mailed them to undertakers throughout the country--$1.50 or the cravat back in ten days. Their profits in the first month would surprise you.

Has anyone failed to respond in ten days? This is still the age of chivalry. The super-salesman's name never appears on the correspondence at all. And what good American would cheat a widow?

*

Other departments have their funny moments too. Why not write them up for the Question Mark? For instance, the Rare Book Department still remembers with pleasure the reader who was doing intensive research on the type of calling card used by the Indians of North America!

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PERSONAL NOTES

New Staff Members

Mary F. Maguire, Information Office.

Mary F. Nagle, Records, Files, and Statistics Office.

Resignations

Gertrude A. Day, Faneuil Branch.

Mary A. Donovan, West End Branch. Miss Donovan was married to Francis X. Scannell, now of the Detroit Public Library, on December 28.

Dorothea Harty, Washington Village Branch.

Mrs. Margaret S. Niland, Book Selection Department, Reference Division. Mrs. Niland has been on leave of absence.

Shirley Winslow, East Boston Branch.

Births

To Mr. and Mrs. Edward Heittman, a son, Edward Ronald, on January 11.

To Mr. and Mrs. John Niland, a son, John, on November 30.

*

Mrs. Dietrichson wishes us to print the following letter:

"May I take this means of expressing my most sincere thanks to the many fellow members of the B. P. L. Staff who sent me kindly cards and notes during my month at the hospital and since. No one who had not gone through such an experience could know what a heart-warming these messages of good will bring. Thank you."

Mary Watkins Dietrichson

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The Wilson Library Bulletin for October 1946 carried several articles by BPL writers: "A Mary Poppins Week," by Eva J. Anttonen, now on leave of absence from East Boston Branch as Children's Librarian, Biblioteca Benjamin Franklin, Mexico City; "The Quiz Invades the Library," by Virginia Haviland, Children's Librarian, Phillips Brooks Branch; "International Book House," by Mildred Kaufman, Children's Librarian, Mount Bowdoin Branch; and "Pinocchio, Art, and a Pushcart," by Dorothy F. Nourse, Branch Librarian, East Boston Branch.

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Boston 17, Massachusetts

9 January 1947

Mr Bradford M. Hill
President, Boston Public Library Professional
Staff Association
Boston, Massachusetts

Dear Mr Hill:

The Boston Public Library Professional Staff Association printed in the November 1946 issue of its bulletin The Question Mark the text of the brief submitted to the Trustees of the Library by the Boston Public Library Employees Local Union #731 in connection with the presentation made by their representatives on the occasion of their meeting with the Trustees on October 21, 1946.

Comments upon the presentation of Local Union #731 were submitted by me as Director of the Library to the Trustees on November 15, 1946. In the belief that these Comments touch upon points which hold interest for all members of the professional staff of the Library, there is submitted herewith a copy of them. It will be greatly appreciated if these Comments may be published in the January 1947 issue of The Question Mark, either in "The Soap Box" column or as an addendum to the issue.

Yours sincerely,

(signed) MILTON E. LORD

Director

Comments on the Presentation to the Trustees of the Library By Representatives of the Boston Public Library Employees Local Union 731 (AFSCME) on October 21, 1946, As Set Forth in their Brief Submitted in Connection with their Presentation.

I.

The representatives of the Employees Union 731 concluded their presentation with four requests:

(1) a thoroughgoing classification of all positions;
(2) open competition in all promotions;
(3) raise maxima of all grades over and above flat increases to all city employees;
(4) distribution of all available money equitably.

The following comments are offered concerning these four points.

A Thoroughgoing Classification of All Positions.

In order to have a background against which to understand how a classification of positions differs from the classification of personnel which exists in the Boston Public Library, there has been made a tabular presentation of several types of classification of positions. For this the following were chosen:

(1) the "Telford" scheme for libraries, prepared in 1925 by the Bureau of Public Personnel Administration under the direction of Mr. Fred Telford;
(2) the A.L.A. Classification and Pay Plan for Municipal Public Libraries, brought out by the American Library Association in 1939;
(3) the M.L.A. Classification Standard for Massachusetts Public Libraries and Positions Therein, brought out by the Massachusetts Library Association in 1939;
(4) the Newark Public Library Position Classification and Pay Plan (1945), this library being one of the most recently reclassified large public libraries in the United States.

Against that tabulation there has been placed the classification of personnel which exists in the Boston Public Library. A copy of the comparative tabulation is appended. (Note: this tabulation was distributed at December staff meetings.)

From the evidence thus presented it would seem that the conclusion can clearly be drawn that the Classification of Personnel in the Boston Public Library is comparable with the four classifications mentioned above. Variations such as exist stem in the main from the following factors:

(1) difference in actual organization arising out of the fact that the Boston Public Library is a very large library;
(2) differences arising out of the existence of unusual special collections in the Boston Public Library;
(3) differences in choice of class titles;
(4) differences in the level at which actual departmental designations are dropped from class titles.

Actually the Boston Public Library has a classification of positions in that individuals are classified by position when and as they meet the personnel classification requirements.

The approach of the Boston Public Library to the process of classification is based on a belief that the Library will be only as good as is its staff and that the individuals who do the work should have priority of consideration as opposed to the work to be done. In its classification of personnel the Boston Public Library does not classify individuals simply as persons without reference to other considerations. It classifies and places them in terms of their meeting the requirements which have been set for specific positions, and for the specific work to be performed. Examples of such positions are: Unclassified Assistant (with 10 specific levels or steps); Probationary Assistant (with 5 specific steps); Assistant (with 3 specific steps); and Second Assistant, Reference Assistant, Children's Assistant, Cataloger, Children's Librarian, First Assistant, etc. (each of these latter with 1 step only). Is this any different from the classification of Telford, A.L.A., M.L.A., or Newark, except in nomenclature? Certainly the appended tabulation does not show that Telford, A.L.A., M.L.A., or Newark are in agreement among themselves in the matter of nomenclature.

There appears to be little evidence to support the proposition that individuals in the service of the Boston Public Library would find themselves at any higher levels if they were classified in accordance with Telford, A.L.A., M.L.A., or Newark procedure than those at which they now find themselves under Boston Public Library procedure. In fact many would find themselves at lower levels, because of failure to meet the minimum requirements set forth in the job descriptions accompanying these other classifications.

The conclusion follows, then, that the Boston Public Library has already a classification which, for all practical purposes, is essentially a classification of positions. In case there remains doubt of this, the Library's statement on classification can be rewritten in such manner as to bring this out position by position.

In this respect there is perhaps a further observation to be made. In a large organization it can and does happen that individuals may find themselves over a period of time with work assignments from their superiors which seem to them to run counter to the type of assignment which they ought to have in terms of their own individual accomplishments or standing. That this can happen means generally either (1) that the work assignments of a department need to be revised in terms of the available personnel or (2) that the institution is not making full use of the capabilities of its personnel. With such a possibility in mind the Trustees have authorized the Director to carry through at once a survey by which (1) each department head and branch librarian is to set down in black and white the work assignments for his unit and (2) each individual worker in each unit is to set down in black and white a statement of the duties which he performs. This survey should reveal what changes, if any, need to be made in those respects.

Open Competition in All Promotions

The Director, in recommending individuals for promotion, and the Trustees, in acting upon the recommendations of the Director, aim in each

instance to take the action which will bring the best possible results to the Library and the public which it serves.

Since there appears to be a question concerning the above procedure, the Library will henceforth undertake to do the following:

(1) make advance announcement of promotional appointments to be made,
   (a) stating minimum qualifications,
   (b) indicating the relative weights to be accorded to education, training, and experience,
   (c) indicating the basis upon which individual candidates will be rated for personality.
(2) invite formal applications from candidates who meet the minimum qualifications, although all such individuals will automatically receive consideration in the future just as in the past.

The evaluation of the individual candidates will then be made insofar as possible in accordance with the principles of the "unassembled examination" procedure.

There will be no public announcement of the relative standing of the several candidates, but any individual candidate may be informed upon request as to both his personal and his relative standing.

Any individual candidate will be given an opportunity to inspect his examination papers after they have been graded, and will be informed also, if he so desires, as to the results of the grading of his papers question by question.

As stated above, the Trustees and the Director aim in each instance to take the action which will bring the best possible results to the Library and the public which it serves.

Raise Maxima of All Grades Over and Above Flat Rate Increases Given to All City Employees

As was announced to the members of the library staff by the Director at the series of staff meetings held early in October, the Trustees had had under consideration for some months before then a revision of the Library's salary schedules. In fact, their budget estimates for the Personal Service Account for 1947 were drawn up on the basis of such revised schedules. Those new schedules have subsequently been publicly presented in detail to the members of the library staff, with the announcement that they can be put into effect only as rapidly as and insofar as appropriated funds permit.

It should be reiterated here that the ability of the Trustees of the Library to make salary adjustments is absolutely and finally dependent upon the appropriations which it may be possible to make available to them for the purpose.

Distribution of All Available Money Equitably

It was never intended, nor has it ever been so stated, that putting the rates of the 1937 salary schedule fully into effect would be the sole basis on which money would be distributed. That was conceived only as a first step, a minimum action for the purpose of providing a base upon which wide and extended action could thereafter be taken. That this latter was to receive the chief emphasis is best indicated by stating that its cost has been estimated to be in the sum of $324,000, as compared with a cost of only $23,000 for that first step.

Obviously, if funds cannot be made available to carry out this whole task at once, action will have to be limited proportionately to the funds actually available. Every attempt will be made to have the resulting distribution of funds made as equitably as possible.

II.

In indicating that the Library's present system of classification of personnel was instituted almost 10 years ago, the representatives of the Employees Union #731 have made the following statements:

> "We do not doubt that it was started with the best of intentions and in good faith. There is also no doubt that the present system is basically illogical, unsound, and exactly opposite to the teachings of all personnel experts. To us it seems quite obvious that eventually this system will have to be discarded".

For what will it have to be discarded? A classification of positions? Such as that of Telford, A.L.A., M.L.A., or Newark? The evidence shows clearly that none of these produces a net result which is substantially different from that produced by the present Boston Public Library procedure, which for all practical purposes is actually as much a classification of positions as a classification of personnel. If, then, this present Boston Public Library system is basically illogical, unsound, and exactly opposite to the teachings of all personnel experts, cannot the same be said no less of the Telford, the A.L.A., the M.L.A., and the Newark systems also?

The representatives of the Union then go on to ask the question as to "What is the present system?" and in reply quote only a part of a single sentence, as underlined below. To give an adequate presentation of the Boston Public Library system, two entire paragraphs from the official notice of June 1, 1937 should be quoted in full, as follows:

> "The proposal is based on two fundamental assumptions. The first of these is that individuals are not naturally equal in their respective capacities and accomplishments, that some can and will progress faster and farther than others, that there must therefore be provided a ladder with easily recognizable steps up which individuals may climb, thus achieving

a classifying and grading of themselves largely through their own efforts. In other words, the proposal is based on a belief that in general the personal qualifications of an individual are likely to afford a better basis for financial recognition than does the relative standing of a particular position in which the individual happens to find himself and to which a particular rate of pay happens to be attached at the moment.

"The second fundamental assumption is that, beyond the possession of the common background that all librarians ought to have of the ordinary tools and techniques of their trade, they ought also to be possessed of specific excellence in some particular direction or directions. The discovery of such competence or excellence in the members of the staff is of the highest importance in the further development of a staff adequate to the needs and standing of the Boston Public Library".

What is there in this statement which is "basically illogical" or "unsound"? Is its net effect "exactly opposite to the teaching of all personnel experts"?

III.

The representatives of the Union have questioned the Statement of the Trustees of March 1, 1946 concerning civil service, as follows:

"The Boston Public Library already has all of the advantages that civil service could offer:

a. Freedom from politics
b. Freedom from favoritism
c. Security of tenure for employees
d. Objective examinations
e. A classification of personnel
f. Opportunity for promotion on a wide basis."

They say that

"Despite use of word 'all', the fact is that there are at least five advantages of civil service not in present system (right to see exams, right of appeal, specific credit for training and experience, saving of money, recruiting, minimum requirements, open announcements,) while some of the advantages listed are at least debatable".

The best procedure to follow here is to examine one at a time these advantages claimed for civil service:

right to see exams -- this has been possible to the extent of discussion in Boston Public Library practice; henceforth it will be possible without restriction of any sort;

right of appeal -- there has always been full right of appeal in the Library, and there still is, to department head or branch librarian, to supervisor, to division head, and up to the Director, and finally to the Trustees;

specific credit for training and experience -- credit has always been given by the Library to training and experience; henceforth there will be specific indication of the relative weights accorded to education, training, and experience;

saving of money -- under civil service there would be needed a Personnel Office in the Library more than ever; civil service, with its inexperience in library affairs, could not operate as efficiently and as inexpensively as could the Library with its long experience; where would the saving of money thus occur?

recruiting -- could civil service, at one step removed from the Library, do as good a job at recruiting at second hand as can the Library at first hand?

minimum requirements -- the Library has long had the practice of stating minimum requirements for all positions up through the 5th step level; it will do so henceforth for all other positions as well;

open announcements -- the Library will make open announcements of all promotional appointments to be made henceforth.

As to the advantages that civil service could offer which the Trustees stated that the Boston Public Library already has, the representatives of the Union have chosen to discuss only one, namely, that the Boston Public Library has "a classification of personnel"; and in connection with this they have noted that the Trustees made "no mention of a classification by positions."And they go on to quote "only one of many authorities on personnel administration", as follows:

> "The most important point in connection with classification, one which cannot be emphasized too strongly, is that positions not persons are to be classified . . . The classification must be entirely in terms of the job itself."

Here there is confusion of thought arising out of a loose use of wards. It has already been shown by the tabular presentation of Telford, A.L.A., M.L.A., Newark, and Boston Public Library procedures that the discussion of classification of position as against classification of personnel is little more than an exercise in words. Is not the problem raised really one of job descriptions and work assignments, and not the resolution of the issue of classification of positions versus classification of personnel? To explore this problem, as already indicated above on p. 2, the Library is now engaged in carrying out a survey of the actual situation existing currently in the matter of job descriptions and work assignments.

IV.

The representatives of the Union have also challenged the statement that

> "B.P.L. has been in the vanguard among libraries in admitting frankly that much of what in libraries is usually designated as 'professional' activity is not professional at all, but actually technical; that most library workers are technicians, and only relatively few are truly professionals."

When the Boston Public Library frankly set up a "Technical Library Service" and a "Professional Library Service" back in 1937, it was indeed in the vanguard. There were then no other voices to support such action. Since then voices have been arising, as evidenced by the following items which have appeared in professional publications recently treating of this matter:

Hoole, W. Stanley
Of the Librarian's Education
American Scholar 13:110-21 [Jan.] 1944

Williams, Edwin E.
Who Does What: Unprofessional Personnel Policies
College and Research Libraries 6:303-309 Sept. 1945

Danton, J. Periam
Education for Librarianship: Criticisms, Dilemmas, and Proposals
Columbia University School of Library Service, 1946 pp.20-22

Osborn, Andrew D.
Review of J. Periam Danton's "Education for Librarianship"
College and Research Libraries 7:359-60 Oct. 1946

Wheeler, Joseph L.
Progress and Problems in Education for Librarianship
Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1946
pp. 64, 87-88

The Union has objected to Boston Public Library practice in this respect on the ground that it is "a breakdown of professional standards". But surely none of the above-mentioned library experts can be accused of being interested in breaking down professional standards.

Nevertheless, while not withdrawing support in any degree from the belief that much of what in libraries is usually designated as "professional" activity is not professional at all, but actually technical, and that most library workers are technicians, and only relatively few are truly professionals, the Library will designate henceforth its Graded Service as the Professional Library Service, and will recognize therein three sections, namely, the Technical Library Service, the Specialist Service, and the Administrative Service.

In this connection the Union has pointed out what it implies was an inconsistency in the Statement of the Trustees of March 1, 1946 concerning civil service, when it was stated that "the work of the bibliothecal staff in a great public library is that of a learned profession, like that of teachers, doctors, or lawyers." Unfortunately that is only a half quotation. The full quotation, which states the problem adequately and completely, is as follows:

> "The work of the bibliothecal staff in a great public library is that of a learned profession, like that of teachers, doctors, or lawyers. The qualities which it needs do not lend themselves

to the same civil service processes which are applicable to activities based primarily upon mechanical or clerical competence."

V.

The representatives of the Union have made also the following statement:

> "Libraries are regarded as educational institutions. This makes especially inexplicable the fact that, despite the repeated requests of the organized employees, the Administration has persistently refused to give specific credit for college training, years of service beyond five, or until recently even for library school training. Reason given was that too much office work would be required."

It was indeed stated that the process of certifying individuals into advanced standing in the Boston Public Library service requires a large amount of office work and correspondence with outside educational institutions. But, as has frequently been officially stated in the Library, the real limitation upon action in this respect has arisen for quite another reason. That has been the decision to avoid the possibility of discrimination in the matter of remuneration against those individuals already in the library service who have not had the good fortune to go themselves to college or library school. Certification for work in a library school or a college has therefore purposely been approached only in a series of steps.

The first step -- certification for library school work in General Book Selection, Cataloging and Classification, and General Reference Work -- first became possible only after 1941. By that time all individuals who were in the library service prior to the institution of the new classification of personnel in 1938 had themselves already reached a remuneration equal to or greater than that which would be given to library school graduates by certification ($23.00 per week).

The second step -- certification for the first promotional step in The Public Library as an Institution -- became possible in turn only in 1944. By that date all individuals in the library service prior to 1938 had already reached or surpassed the salary level at which library school graduates would be certified for this first promotional level ($29.00 per week).

And the third step -- certification for the second and third promotional steps on the basis of major fields of study in a college or university -- will become possible for the first time only in 1947. By then all individuals in the library service prior to 1938 will have already reached or surpassed the salary level at which such college graduates will be certified for these second and third promotional levels ($37.00 per week).

Thus by extending the application of the principle of certification step by step the possibility of discrimination in remuneration has been avoided in the case of all of the individuals already in the library service prior to 1938 who had not had themselves the good fortune to go to college or library school.

VI.

In speaking of "open competition in all promotions", the representatives of the Union request that there be "no discrimination in regard to sex", and add that "two-thirds of best positions are for all practical purposes now closed to men."

As of October 1, 1946 the count of men and women in the bibliothecal service of the Library was as follows:

Men	68	(17%)
Women	337	(83%)
	405	(100%)

Obviously the "best positions" in the Library are those at the level of department head and branch librarian or higher. The distribution of those among men and women as of October 1, 1946 was as follows:

Men	13	(19%)
Women	55	(81%)
	68	(100%)

For this group at least the men do not appear to have been discriminated against because of their sex. If anything, they seem to have been accorded a slight preference.

For the next two levels below the officer group just mentioned the men are indeed in a disproportionate minority. To positions at these two levels individuals can be appointed only (1) after they have become eligible through passing certain required promotional examinations and (2) when and as there are vacancies to be filled. If the men do not present themselves for and pass the required promotional examinations, they are obviously not eligible for those appointments when and as such are made. That is what has happened. Proportionate to their number the men have not qualified for promotion to these two levels as well as have the women.

Actually there is no discrimination in regard to sex in the making of promotional appointments in the Library. The Director and the Trustees are activated solely by the desire to appoint in each instance the best qualified person from among those whose names are on the eligible list.

VII

Finally, the representatives of the Union state that the "most striking" manifestation of the "widespread dissatisfaction among the Library employees with present system" is "the steady stream of resignations of highly trained employees." And again:

> "The answer to this treatment of professionals has been a steady stream of resignations from the staff by experienced, highly trained employees. And it is not a prophecy but a mere statement of fact that, unless the Administration acts constructively and rapidly in this matter, the end is not in sight."

An examination of each resignation in the course of 1945 and in 1946 up to November 1st shows the following reasons for these resignations from the library service:

	1945	1946
Marriage	27	21
To take positions in other libraries	9	5
To take other positions (not in libraries)	24	15
To attend school	5	2
Illness	3	3
Did not meet library requirements	2	1
To enter military service	1	1
For personal reasons	3	1
Total	74	49

Obviously the bulk of these resignations did not occur primarily because of dissatisfaction with the present system in the Library. For example, in taking positions in other libraries or outside of the library field, the individuals left invariably to go to higher salaries than those paid by the Boston Public Library. This has been happening in all libraries throughout the country, although as a matter of record it should be pointed out that the Boston Public Library has apparently not suffered as heavily in this respect as many other libraries.

As recently as October 24, 1946 the three New York library systems were reported as having existing vacancies in 315 out of their 1715 positions, because of attractive offers from other institutions and industry requiring librarian services.

As of May 16, 1946 the Brooklyn Public Library was reported as having one-third of all of its positions vacant because of low salaries. Only fifteen of its thirty-five branch libraries were operating full-time because of personnel shortages, and the twenty other branches were indicated as open only two or three days a week. The Boston branch libraries are still open daily six days a week.

MILTON E. LORD

Director

November 15, 1946

THE QUESTION MARK

Published by the Boston Public Library Professional Staff Association

Vol. II February 1947 No. 2

EDITOR'S CORNER

In view of the Director's recent notice concerning appropriate attire for the masculine members of the staff, it seems not inappropriate to remark that possibly there is room for improvement in the costume of some of the feminine contingent. Our stone floors do make loafers very practical, but do we have to wear them broken down at the heels, dirty and scuffed like old bedroom slippers? We would hate to see the feminine members of the staff decked out like a movie director's dream of a frustrated librarian. However, some of the wilted dirndls topped by low-necked peasant blouses look more like something out of a mob scene from "A Tale of Two Cities" than "Mademoiselle" or "Vogue's" idea of what the well-dressed business girl should wear. Nor is chewing gum at a desk advocated by "Glamour."

*

The crowded conditions in Bates Hall of recent months make us feel that Joshua Bates would be very pleased with the results of his thoughtfulness of Boston's needs could he look in on us today. When he was head of the banking house of Baring he did not forget his native land but donated fifty thousand dollars for the purchase of books plus a second donation of nearly 27,000 books. He fully appreciated the advantages for a young man in having a place in which to study, saying of his own youth: "Having no money to spend and no place to go to, and not being able to pay for a fire or light in my own room, I could not pay for books, and the best way I could pass my evenings was to sit in a book store and read, as I was kindly permitted to do."

COMMITTEES

Members in the following committees have been chosen:

CONSTITUTION

Eamon McDonough, Cataloging and Classification Department, Reference Division, Chairman.

Dorothy Becker, North End Branch.

Marjorie Gibbons, Washington Village Branch.

MEMBERSHIP

Louis Rains, General Reference Department, Chairman.

Frank Bruno, Patent Room.

Nura Globus, West End Branch.

James McGillicuddy, Book Stack Service.

Evelyn Marden, Allston Branch.

Mary Waters, Cataloging and Classification, Reference Division.

PROGRAM

Dorothy Nourse, East Boston Branch, Chairman.

Anne Connors, South Boston Branch.

Samuel Green, Business Office.

Christine Hayes, Book Selection, Reference Division.

Irene Tuttle, Jamaica Plain Branch.

STAFF LIBRARY BOOK RECOMMENDATION

Geraldine Altman, Dorchester Branch, Chairman.

Harry Andrews, Branch Issue Department.

Florence Connolly, Fine Arts Department.

Charles Higgins, General Reference Department.

Janet Langendoen, Jamaica Plain Branch.

Leonard Macmillan, Book Purchasing Department.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Sarah W. Flannery, History Department, Chairman.
(Other members to be announced later).

*

PERSONAL NOTES

New Staff Members

Orville L. Walker, General Reference Department.

Virginia Leahy, Book Stack Service.

Myron L. Miller, Book Stack Service.

Carol S. Rubin, Fine Arts Department.

Robert D. Hevey, Business Branch.

Florence K. Goodman, Codman Square Branch.

Helen W. Ja, Director's Office.

Nathan R. Fearer, Book Stack Service.

Norton A. Goldstein, Book Stack Service.

Sonia Greenberg, Business Branch.

Sylvia Vagenheim, Cataloging and Classification Department, Reference Division.

Nancy E. Butler, Book Stack Service.

Marie J. Pineo, Mattapan Branch, (Miss Pineo had been employed as an Extra Assistant at Mattapan).

John J. Hallahan, Book Stack Service, (Mr. Hallahan was employed in Book Stack Service before entering the U. S. Navy in 1945).

Phyllis A. Erikson, Mattapan Branch, (Miss Erikson was formerly employed at Allston Branch).

Doris Lantz Montgomery, Uphams Corner Branch, (Mrs. Montgomery worked at Uphams Corner from 1939 through 1945).

Edith L. Sliney, Office of Records, Files and Statistics.

Transfers

Mary-Louise A. Daly, Roslindale Branch, to West End Branch.

Dorothy J. Flood, West End Branch, to Roslindale Branch.

Ethel Kimball, Mattapan Branch, to Allston Branch.

Mary G. Langton, Brighton Branch, to West End Branch.

Charlotte R. Cooper, Uphams Corner, to Memorial Branch.

Ruth Fishburne, Memorial Branch, to Mt. Bowdoin Branch.

M. Kathleen Moran, Uphams Corner Branch, to Memorial Branch.

Eamon E. McDonough, Book Stack Service, to Cataloging and Classification Department, Reference Division.

Anne C. Magner, Allston Branch, to Brighton Branch.

Catherine C. Kelly, Neponset Branch, to Codman Square Branch.

Lent

Ruth S. Cannell, Assistant to the Chief Librarian of the Circulation Division, to the Director's Office for the period of Miss Brockunier's absence because of illness.

Marriages

Elva Rogers, on military leave from Codman Square Branch, was married last summer to Lloyd Pearson. Mrs. Pearson is now in Columbia, South Carolina, and expects to enter the University of South Carolina in the spring.

Margaret J. Carr, Director's Office, was married to Joseph H. Lynch on Saturday, February 15, 1947.

Veterans returned

Martin F. Waters, Book Stack Service, lent to History Department.

Returned from leave of absence

Geraldine T. Beck, to West Roxbury Branch, on February 17. Mrs. Beck was on maternity leave.

Resignations

Klementyna James, Memorial Branch.

Hilda K. Stolov, General Reference Department. Mrs. Stolov has returned to New York.

Bertha S. Smith, Business Branch. Miss Smith is resuming her studies at Northeastern University.

Kenneth H. Melzard, Book Stack Service.

Frederick J. Ross, Cataloging and Classification Department, Reference Division. Mr. Ross has been on military leave and now has a new position.

Evelyn F. Caswell, Science and Technology Department, is resigning as of March 7, in order to accept a position as Librarian at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Guided Missiles Research Project.

Death

Miss Gertrude L. Connell, Librarian, Faneuil Branch, suddenly on February 21, 1947.

*

RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE STAFF LIBRARY

NON-FICTION

Bemelmans, Ludwig. Hotel Bemelmans. 36 stories of New York hotel life.
Brown, John Mason. Seeing things. Essays on plays, the theatre and other subjects.
Dahl, Francis. Dahl's Boston.
Dos Passos, John. Tour of duty. Report of the war fronts 1944-1945.
Finletter, Gretchen. From the top of the stairs. Life in the Damrosch household.
Graham, Elinor. Maine charm string.
Greenslet, Ferris. The Lowells and their seven worlds.
Kravchenko, Victor. I chose freedom. Former Soviet official renounces communism for democracy.
Marquis, Don. The best of Don Marquis.
Pearson, Hesketh. Oscar Wilde, his life and wit.
Perelman, S. J. Keep it crisp. Humorous essays.
Poole, Ernest. The great White Hills of New Hampshire.
Robert, Grace. The Borzoi book of ballets.
Roosevelt, Elliott. As he saw it.
Russell, Diarmuid, ed. Portable Irish reader. A representative collection of most of the major Irish writers.
Sedgwick, Ellery. The happy profession.
Smith, H. Allen. Three Smiths in the wind. Omnibus of this humorist's works.
Welles, Sumner. Where are we heading?

FICTION

Asch, Shalom. East River. Life among the immigrants on the East Side at the turn of the century.
De La Roche, Mazo. Return to Jalna.
Esquire. Esquire's second sports reader.

Forester, Cecil S. Lord Hornblower.
Godden, Rumer. The river.
Story of adolescent daughters of Anglo-Indian family in Bengal.
Heggen, Thomas. Mr. Roberts.
Life on a cargo ship in the Pacific during the recent war.
Howe, Helen. We happy few.
Satirizes the intellectual snobbery of an exclusive group of Harvard professors and their wives.
Janney, Russell. The miracle of the bells. Story of small Pennsylvania coal town involving beautiful Polish-American girl who goes to Hollywood and is brought home for burial.
Jennings, John. The Salem frigate.
The Navy during the War of 1812.
LaFarge, Oliver. The sudden guest.
Compelling psychological study of a selfish old spinster told against the background of the 1938 and 1944 New England hurricanes.
Marquand, John. B. F's daughter.
Moore, Ruth. Spoonhandle. Delightful story over family feud over whether to sell Spoonhandle, an island off Maine coast, to summer residents.
Osborne, Letitia. Through purple glass.
Life in apartment house on Beacon St.
Wakeman, Frederick. The hucksters.
Satire of behind-the-scenes in radio.
Warren, Robert Penn. All the king's men.
Novel of southern demagogue resembling Huey Long.
White, Terence H. Mistress Masham's repose. Fantasy of modern little girl in English castle who finds colony of Lilliputians on the estate.
Yerby, [illegible]. The Foxes of Harrow.
The saga of a beautiful Southern plantation home, the colorful reprobate who built it, and his family during the Civil War period.

*

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

The Executive Board of the Association met on Wednesday, February 12, at 2:30 P.M. to complete the procedure of the poll taken to determine the opinion of the members on House 1623 and Senate 405, and to decide what action should be taken on this proposed legislation.

303 ballots were sent to the members of the Association, 151 were returned in time to be considered, 8 were received after the meeting and had to be invalidated.

The returns were checked against the membership list by the secretary as they were received. All names were removed from the ballots and then the count was taken and the comments recorded.

The results were:

House 1623	Yes.....	124
	No.....	19
	No opinion.....	8
		151

The comments on this bill showed it is considered to be a necessary step toward higher standards. Some brought out the question of equivalences for those already in professional work, and also the future value of the M. L. A. certificate.

Senate 405	Yes.....	89
	No.....	50
	No opinion.....	12
		151

Most of the comments on this bill were in disfavor as the voters consider the bill not clearly defined. State Aid is approved by many as is the increase in salaries, but some feel the increases should be made on a percentage basis.

Since the majority of votes cast were in favor, it was decided that the Association should stand in support of these bills, and as requested by the Secretary of the Legislative Committee of the Massachusetts Library Association, the President should attend the Hearing on House 1623 before the Committee on State Administration on February 19 and express approval.

Letters also registering approval are being sent to the members of the latter committee. If this bill is reported on favorably, letters will be sent to each Representative and Senator in the Boston District. It was decided that legislators beyond this district could be contacted personally.

Action to be taken on Senate 405 will be determined when this bill is presented and the date of Hearing set.

*

The following item was brought to our attention by Esther Lissner of the Cataloging and Classification Department, Reference Division. It is taken from "Six happy weeks among the Americans" by Margaret E. Parker, President of the Women's International Christian Temperance Union. (Glasgow 1876?)

Mrs. Parker describes her arrival in Boston and visit to Wendell Phillips and continues: "We went to the large public library, an imposing building, which took some time to go through. A city with such a library ought to be celebrated for its learning. I was amazed at its extent, and the air of elegance and refinement it presented. All the passages and staircases are carpeted, and I was charmed to find that seventy young ladies attend to the various departments; and Mr. Phillips told me that they earned handsome salaries--some hundreds of dollars a-year. They are all provided with comfortable chairs, and I can imagine that, on the whole, they have a pleasant, easy life, giving out books and keeping a register of those lent. I saw many of them (when not employed) reading in easy chairs. A few men are there--I suppose to lift heavy books on those high shelves. The young ladies were well dressed and superior looking, and I should think, of themselves, they are an attraction to the library--whatever may be said of the books. Mr. Phillips asked if we employed young ladies in this manner in the old country. I said I thought not, but it seemed a very fitting kind of employment for women."

*

The East Boston Branch copy of Sigmund Spaeth's "At home with music" was recently returned to the branch through the U. S. mails with the following return address:

A. Thief
1742 Porter Street
East Boston 28, Mass.

*

ALL
CONTRIBUTIONS
GRATEFULLY RECEIVED !!!

The "Kitty" of the Association is in need of replenishing before the next meeting. Any member or friend interested in contributing and thereby insuring the serving of refreshments at this meeting may send a small (or large) sum to the Treasurer, Miss Robbins, in the Director's Office.

THE QUESTION MARK

Published by the Boston Public Library Professional Staff Association

Vol. II March 1947 No. 3

EDITOR'S CORNER

Now that action on Senate Bill 405 has been deferred to the next session of the legislature, many of us will have a tendency to relax and forget it, for the time being, or at least relegate it to a back corner of our minds until it is time for it to be presented again.

Instead of letting the matter slide, why not keep it in mind and mention it to our friends from time to time, so that when it comes up again we will have people who know what it is about and might be willing to send in a postcard to let their Senator know they are for it. A little advertising pays big dividends! The bill interests us all and its passage will be of benefit to us all. So let's keep it on our minds and be ready to take advantage of every opportunity, however small, to further its passage.

*

Our spring social season offers many opportunities for fun and good companionship, we should judge from the notices of the various scheduled affairs. The Benefit Association Banquet we all know will be a great good time and promises much enjoyment; no boosting needed--it speaks for itself. Pops, however, we must not forget. For an evening of informal, friendly gaiety, nothing, for a large group, can surpass the opportunity an evening at Pops offers. So let's all mark June 6 on our calendars as an evening to be saved for fun and jollity.

*

Your editor begs your patience over the delay in issuing this March issue. Circumstances beyond our control delayed the February number somewhat, and now the delay has cumulated so that this number is really late. We expect the April issue before the month is out, however.

*

PERSONAL NOTES

New Staff Members

Mrs. Bette B. Preer, School Issue Department.

Mrs. Anne Moore Mandeville, working part-time at Faneuil Branch where she was a full-time staff member in 1943.

William G. Faherty, Business Office. He formerly worked part-time in the Periodical and Newspaper Department.

Ben Iijima, Business Branch.

Jean Bruce, Roslindale Branch.

Mrs. Jeanne Witkowski, has been working this past month at Roslindale Branch. Now at Washington Village Branch.

Transfers

Grace Chippendale, Memorial Branch, to Registration Department.

Martin Waters, recently returned from service in the Army where he was working on the theory and history of maps, mapmaking and photogrammetry. He has been assigned to the History Department, but formerly was in the Book Stack Service.

Marjorie Gibbons, Mattapan Branch, to Washington Village Branch where she has been during Miss Buckley's absence.

Resignations

Pauline Riordan, Business Branch, to accept another position.

Merrilie Mather, Dorchester Branch, to study.

Lillian Perry, South End Branch.

*

Harold W. Stoke, President of New Hampshire University, visited the Boston Public Library recently to get information on our classification of personnel and salary schedule, and to get points on the organization of a catalog department.

*

HOME WANTED

We are soliciting good homes for four superior kittens, and one intellectual, Branch-Issue-Department-trained Mother Cat.

"Sparkie" is a beautiful gray tabby, with golden eyes, double paws, dainty appetite, well-modulated contralto purr, and a sweet disposition. We sincerely regret the necessity of this eviction, but we know that our loss will be your gain.

Avoid disappointment - speak up promptly!

Applications accepted in Branch Issue Department.

LATEST BULLETIN! Homes have been found for the kittens - only "Sparkie" still available!

*

POPS TIME AGAIN!

Pops Party for B.P.L.P.S.A. June 6th

P lan to patronize Pops Party.
O bject, to provide pennies plentifully,
P revent possible, pitiful, poverty, and penury,
S o pleasantly, patriotically, and philanthropically.

P lease participate properly.
A ll patrons persuaded powerfully.
R emember popular philharmonic pleasure.
T reat pals plentifully to pink Pops Punch.
Y ou pledge personal participation promptly please.

*

COMMITTEE NOTES

Entertainment Committee

Mrs. Geraldine S. Herrick, North End Branch, Chairman.
Rita M. Desaulniers, Business Branch.
Marie R. Kennedy, Lower Mills Branch.
Ethel Kimball, Allston Branch.
Margaret A. Munsterberg, Rare Book Department.
Ollie J. Partridge, Open Shelf Department.

*

OUR DIRECTOR

Mr. Lord's calendar in recent weeks has included the following:

February 26-27, Conference of the heads of the large public libraries of the United States which have building programs under consideration, at Chicago.

March 3. Meeting of M.I.T. Corporation's Library Committee, at Cambridge and Boston.

March 5-6. Meeting of the A.L.A. International Relations Board, at New York City.

March 7. Meeting of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library.

March 13. Meeting of the Board of Directors of the American Book Center for War Devastated Libraries, at Washington.

March 14-15. Meeting of the Association of Research Libraries, at Washington.

March 21. Meeting of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library.

March 24. Meeting of the Executive Board of the Massachusetts Library Association, at Boston.

*

Mr. Lord goes to Oslo, Norway to attend the May 20-22 meeting of the International Federation of Library Associations, of which he was elected Vice President at the meeting of the International Library Committee held in Geneva last November. He will be the chairman of the A.L.A. delegation at the Oslo meetings.

*

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At the meeting of the Executive Board of the B.P.L.P.S.A. held on April 1, Pauline Walker of the West Roxbury Branch was named to fill the vacancy on the Executive Board resulting from Evelyn Caswell's recent resignation.

*

EAST BOSTON'S ANNIVERSARY

A very happy climax to the seventy-fifth anniversary celebrations of the East Boston Branch Library took place at eight o'clock in its lecture hall on Thursday, March 20th. The distinguished guests and friends were welcomed and the nine gentlemen on the platform introduced by the Branch Librarian, Dorothy F. Nourse who acted as hostess. Albert West, Chairman of the Birthday Gift Committee, read letters and telegrams of congratulation from Senators Saltonstall and Lodge, Governor Bradford, Mayor Curley, Superintendent of Schools Gould, Arthur Fiedler and Dr. Serge Koussevitsky. He then made presentation to this branch library of a moving picture projector with sound track, which Judge Pinanski accepted in the name of the Trustees.

Mr. West then presented Miss Nourse with a lovely bouquet of spring flowers from the Birthday Gift Committee. William F. Kelly, a member of the Committee, presented an electric phonograph with a public address system donated by an anonymous public-minded citizen. Francis B. Masterson, a member of the Board of Trustees, accepted the gift for the Library. After the audience had an opportunity to hear the fine tone of the phonograph, Mr. Lord spoke about the plans for a bronze plaque to mark this library as the first branch library in the United States, and talked about the formation of a Friends of the Library group for the East Boston Branch Library. Miss Nourse discussed briefly the plans for the use of the new audio-visual gifts and thanked the community for their generous presents which will so benefit both the old and young in East Boston. She announced that albums of records had already been given by the community, friends of the library, and two by the staff of the East Boston Library. A colored film on Mexico concluded the program.

Punch and cookies were served in the children's room which was festive with jonquils and forsythia. Miss Catherine Flannery and Miss Christiana Jordan, Branch Librarians of Orient Heights and Jeffries Point Branch Libraries presided at the punch bowls.

*

Executive Board Report on SENATE BILL 405 Hearing

The hearing on Senate Bill 405 was held before the Joint Ways and Means Committee at the State House on Monday, March 24.

The President and 3 members of the Executive Board of the B.P.L.P.S.A. attended the hearing and voted on the bill as individuals. Although the majority returns from members of the Association originally polled in the ballot of February 7 had voted in favor of the bill in the form submitted at that time, it was the decision of the Executive Board that, since time did not permit re-polling the membership on the amendments since added and announced to the staff on March 21, the President did not have the authority to speak for the Association at the hearing.

The amendments which the Executive Board believed altered the bill sufficiently to necessitate a new poll before the Board could act with authority for the Association were:

1. The amount of reimbursement.

   In the announcement accompanying the original bill which was sent to the members of the staff on February 5 by the President of the Boston Public Library Employees Union, it was stated that "the bill if passed would raise the salaries of all public library employees in the state to the extent of $1,000."

In the amended bill (Section 23, paragraphs 1, 2, and 3) the payments would be substantially less (if interpreted as being applied to individual salaries).

2. The amount of reimbursement to individuals to be dependent on certification and existing salary scales (Section 23, paragraphs 1, 2, and 3. "Assumption being made that House 1623 becomes law. If not, other minimum requirements would be stated.")

In the original bill reimbursement was not specified as being dependent on these requirements.

Petition

A petition was received by the Executive Board from members of the B.P.L. P.S.A. after the hearing on Senate Bill 405 (State Aid) requesting that a special meeting of the Association be called to consider the bill as then amended.

However, as both Houses of the Legislature have now accepted the recommendation of the Joint Ways and Means Committee that action on the bill be deferred until the next session no action will be taken on the petition at this time.

Members of the staff will be interested to know that state aid is to be the theme of the discussion of the afternoon session, on May 15, at the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Library Association to be held in Pittsfield May 15 and 16.

*

A LETTER FROM THE BENEFIT ASSOCIATION

Dear Folks:

I'm about to celebrate my forty-fifth anniversary. For forty-five years I've been in the service of the Boston Public Library employees. As I look back over the years, they've been years of faithful service. I think that calls for a celebration. Some of my friends evidently thought so too, for they got together the other day and decided that it would be fitting if we all met together at the Puritan Hotel on Thursday, May 22, at 7.30 P.M. There will be a dinner, dancing, entertainment and time for some neighborly visiting.

It might be that one of your friends or some member of your family would like to come too. If so, I sure would be happy to have them join us. I'm a plain, simple fellow, so please don't come all dressed up in evening clothes.

Now there is nothing I would like better in all the world than to be able to invite you as my guests, but even after 45 years in your service I'm still not rich, so I'll have to ask you to buy your own ticket ($2.75) but I'll be able to take care of some of the incidentals and that will make you partly my guest, won't it?

Why not save that date, May 22, and we'll all get together and have some real fun? I'll be able to give you more details as the plans develop.

Fraternally yours,

B.P.L.E.B.A.

*

BOOKS FOR THE STAFF LIBRARY

The Staff Library Book Recommendation Committee would find it extremely helpful to receive suggestions from members of the staff. Specific titles, subjects, or any ideas you may have concerning your library will be welcome. The form supplied below is for your convenience. It may be clipped and sent to the Committee.

To the Staff Library Book Recommendation Committee: I suggest the following addition to the Staff Library:

AUTHOR _____

TITLE _____

PUBLISHER _____ DATE _____

RECOMMENDED BY _____

*

THE QUESTION MARK

Published by the Boston Public Library Professional Staff Association

Vol. II April 1947 No. 4

EDITOR'S CORNER

A man we knew had a maxim that a dinner called for 6:30 should begin no later than 8. Similarly, we believe that an April issue of the Question Mark should come out no later than May, and that's all we're going to say about it.

*

We gazed into our Farmer's Almanac the other night to get the weather forecast for the vacation period and here it is:

For Extras: No weather at all.
For Sub-professionals: Stormy, with high pressure areas.
For Probationaries: Rainy, with slowly rising prices.
For Assistants (General): Fair, with some thunder on the left.
For Chiefs: Fine, turning to excellent, changing to superb. No wind.

*

POPS

Three hundred Pops tickets in the first balcony are being reserved for the B.P.L.P.S.A. party on June 6th. All members of the staff are urged to get their seats early and choose their favorite sections. Remember 25¢ of each $1.25 ticket goes to the depleted B.P.L.P.S.A. treasury. All staff members and friends may obtain tickets after May 6th from the Program Committee: Dorothy F. Nourse, East Boston Branch; Samuel Green, Business Office; Christine Hayes, Book Selection Department; Anne Connors, South Boston Branch; Irene Tuttle, Jamaica Plain Branch.

*

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Mlle. Simone de Beauvoir, French novelist, playwright and, according to the "New Yorker" no. 2 Existentialist, was a visitor at the Library on April 18. Mlle. de Beauvoir is lecturing in this country under the auspices of the French-government Cultural Service. She is a close friend of Jean Paul Sartre, the dean of the philosophical school of Existentialism.

*

THE DIRECTOR'S SCHEDULE FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL

April 1. Meeting of Executive Committee of Trustees of the American Library in Paris, at New York City.

April 7. Meeting of M.L.A. Legislative, Planning and Standards Committees.

April 11. Meeting of Trustees of Boston Public Library.

April 14. Meeting of Corporation of Simmons College.

April 15. Meeting of M.L.A. Special Committee on State Aid for Libraries.

April 16. Meeting of M.I.T. Corporation's Library Committee.

April 21. Meeting of Executive Board of Massachusetts Library Association.

April 22. Meeting of Executive Committee of Trustees of the American Library in Paris, at New York City.

April 25. Meeting of Trustees of Boston Public Library.

April 28-29. Meeting of Cooperative Committee on Public Library Building Plans, at Princeton.

April 30-May 1. Meeting of Cooperative Committee on Public Library Building Plans (continued), at Detroit.

*

On Tuesday April 1, the staff of the Book Purchasing Department held an informal reception in honor of Miss Alice Hanson of that department whose retirement from the Library service becomes effective the thirtieth of this month. A beautiful picture of a pink flamingo was presented to her by her friends on the staff who are well acquainted with her love for birds. Miss Hanson plans to continue her residence in Boston and devote her time to her hobbies, the chief of which is the study of birdlife.

*

To the Women Members of the Staff:

A great many of the recently acquired cups and saucers, as well as silverware, have disappeared from the lunch room in the Women's Quarters. These were purchased for the use of all the members of the staff who may have need of them, not for any one individual alone, and are not to be removed from the lunch room without permission.

Very often a person has to waste precious minutes of her lunch hour, waiting for someone to finish her lunch, in order to obtain a cup and saucer as well as some silverware. Will you kindly check your locker and your desk and if you find any of the above items, return them to the lunch room, where they will then be available to all when most needed.

MARY D. FARRELL, Chairman
Women's House Committee

*

Warner Brothers movie stars and technicians have invaded the Library. A film in which Claude Rains and Jane Wyman will star has scenes from the main stairway and the Rare Book Department. Faneuil Hall and Harvard University are also being used in this movie which is to be called Up Till Now.

*

PERSONAL NOTES

New Staff Members

Mrs. Ruth B. Ross, General Reference Department.

Mr. H. Earle Johnson, Music Department.

Miss Gloria L. Lombard, Cataloging and Classification Department, Reference Division.

Miss Bruna Cedrone returned to work in the Book Stack Service after an absence of almost a year.

Miss Rhoda Blacker, Dorchester Branch, who worked full-time in a branch library during her vacation last year.

Miss Bertha Smith, a Northeastern University student, resumed work at the Business Branch, after her winter term at classes.

Transfers

Miss Alice M. Buckley, Children's Librarian, Washington Village Branch to Allston Branch.

Mrs. Evelyn B. Marden, Children's Librarian, Allston Branch to Charlestown Branch.

Miss Mary L. Gilman, Children's Librarian, Charlestown Branch to Lower Mills Branch.

Miss Marie R. Kennedy, Lower Mills Branch to Orient Heights Branch.

Resignations

Miss Sylvia Vagenheim, Cataloging and Classification Department, Reference Division, to return to school.

Mrs. Mary Lentini, Stock Department, to stay at home.

Mrs. Dorothy G. Donohue, Charlestown Branch, to stay at home.

Mrs. Carol C. DuBuron, Information Office, to stay at home.

Retirements

Miss M. Florence Cufflin, Branch Librarian, Allston Branch, as of 30 April.

Miss Alice Hanson, Assistant, Book Purchasing Department, as of 30 April.

*

Miss Mary E. Quinn was married on Easter Sunday to Hilbert L. Smith. Her sister, Edna Yauney, was here for the occasion, from her home in St. Johnsville, N. Y.

*

THE SOAP BOX

May 5, 1947

To the Editor:

Not being an articulate soul, it was with some hesitancy that I decided to take my typewriter in hand and to request a brief space in that most democratic of all institutions, THE SOAP BOX, in which to pose a few queries which are troubling me personally. Finding that I was not alone in my state of perplexity, I joined a group honestly seeking enlightenment. Thus, quite unintentionally, this has become a group inquiry.

Most of us who have been in the library service for several years realize that definite steps in progressive organization have taken place within recent years. We know that the City Government is becoming library-conscious and that our budget is showing a favorable increase each passing year, due primarily to the Director's presentation of library requirements before that body. This year the sum requested and the sum received by the Library for running expenses give proof that we are gradually beginning to approach an adequate sum with which to carry out our required service to the public.

There is one phase of the administering of the funds received which disturbs us. Those belonging to the Branch Librarian-Head of Department group have been fully aware for some years that wide discrepancies in pay exist within that group. The group was given to understand that as soon as funds were available adjustments within the group would be made. We grant that at the time any new system is inaugurated certain inequalities exist inevitably. We now ask why these inequalities, once having been recognized, could not have been corrected over a period of nine years? Is it through indifference or that the laborer is not worthy of his hire that the following conditions are allowed to exist?

1. Some Branch Librarians and Heads of Departments are receiving less salary than two First Assistants.
   (Lovett . O'Connor)
2. Several First Assistants and Children's Librarians are receiving only seventy-five dollars less than certain members of the Branch Librarian-Head of Department group.
   Altman
3. Branch Librarians and Heads of Departments who have been in their present positions for over fifteen years are receiving less salary than a Branch Librarian appointed only four years ago.
4. Several Branch Librarians and Chiefs of Departments not only have not reached the new minimum salaries (1947 schedule), they have not yet reached their old maximums (1937 schedule).

The usual answer to any complaint is that there is no money. Where then did the money come from which was used to pay salary increases for courses which were taken nearly twenty years ago? Many Training Class graduates have been paid three times for these same courses:

1. They were allowed to take this training on library time; they received a salary while attending classes and doing practice work.
2. Upon completion of this course of training, they received salary increases.
3. In 1947 they received an additional $150.

Without increasing the total amount asked for in the personal service budget, would it not be fair some year to ask for less for grade increases and more for step rate increases so that this Branch Librarian-Head of Department group might be given the advantage just once? It seems logical that the examination-earning group might be deprived of increases because of lack of funds once in a while, rather than that the Branch Librarian-Head of Department group should always get the small end of the deal.

In this system there seems to be no recognition of good and successful service. An assistant may be a poor assistant, doing a minimum amount of work; she may be frequently absent and often tardy; but, let that assistant pass an examination and she may receive as much as $200 as a reward, while the Branch Librarian or Head of Department who carries the entire load of responsibility, and is denied the privilege of receiving financial credits for courses taken, is expected to give "supertest" service and wait with resignation for the few crumbs which may fall from the table of her more fortunate colleagues.

It is hoped that something will be done in the near future to adjust the obvious discrepancies within this group of officers. For, Time Marches On and those individuals in this group, deprived for several years of the rate of pay given to other individuals supposedly within the same salary group, are going to be substantial losers when their pension days, which for many of the group are not too far off, arrive. Would it not be possible with the money allotted in the annual budget to take some cognizance of the discrepancies within this group before the Pension Man or the Grim Reaper make such adjustments of no avail?

*

May 5, 1947

Dear Fellow-members:

May I suggest that the Professional Staff Association take any steps possible to help straighten out the inequalities in the financial situation in the Library?

If Chiefs and Branch Librarians who took promotional examinations prior to their appointment have been, in the past, given raises on the basis of these examinations after they were appointed as Chiefs and Branch Librarians, why are those in that classification barred from collecting the $150 that graduates of the Library's Training Class were given certification credit for this year? It does not seem consistent with the policy up to this time.

And why, speaking of inconsistencies, are employees who pass a certified course at a library school, granted immediately upon completion of the course, the monetary compensation for that step, while other employees who perhaps cannot afford time or money to attend library school, must wait from 6 months to a year or more after taking Library examinations for the same step. Just because an employee attends a library school, it should not follow that he or she is a better or more interested employee than the employee who stays home and does his own work as well as that of the student at library school, nor should extra money be paid one before the other for the same accomplishment.

This certification compensation proves to be unfair on another account. Pay raises are usually limited to $200 each year per person. Yet some few individuals this year, already at their 1937 maximums, are said to have received MORE than $200. If the money above the announced maximum of $200 was obtained on certification in addition to the examination credits, it is definitely most unfair to others on the staff who have additional credit for which they have not been paid. And if they were paid additional money on certification, why were not the Training Class graduates paid their additional certification money in addition to examination money too. Is it fair to overpay one group on certification, and yet make a similar group wait another year? Does not additional money mean as much to one employee as another? Is there a growing favored group of those who are able to attend library school? And is not this trend more than unfair to the older members of the staff who have responsibilities which

do not permit attendance at such schools but who have formerly qualified under several different systems? Does not such experience rate somewhat higher than untried theoretical knowledge in most professions?

Staff morale needs something done for the older employee who sees the majority of the better positions, and nearly all the available money, going to the younger and more superficial members of the staff. Honest, reliable service no longer seems to command even a slight trace of gratitude these days. More and more rewards seem to be given to those doing less and less. It does not make for a healthy attitude towards the institution on the part of either the older or the younger employees. I suggest that the Professional Staff Association study the situations involved and attempt to convince the administration that there could be beneficial changes made.

*

April 24, 1947

Dear Editors:

There is a new "Forgotten man" in the library today...members owning fourth step or second assistant ratings. Or are they either the fish, as represented by Mr. O'Neil of the first assistants and Miss Hayes of the Children's Librarians (also a fifth step rating), or fowl, as represented by Mesdames Hastie and Manning and Messieurs Lynch and Rains of the general assistants? Or are they being personally represented by Miss Metcalf of the Professional Association?

According to the latest Statistical report, there are 19 Chiefs and 4 Assistants-in-Charge. They have a representative on the committee. The 28 Branch Librarians have a member; the 31 First Assistants and 8 others of the fifth step level and the 20 Children's Librarians have a representative each; the 122 general assistants have representation to the extent of approximately one in 30. There are 23 Second Assistants and 14 others of 4th step level...a total of 37 without representation. A curious occurence. Why?

One of them.

(Editors' Note: We assume that this letter refers to the committee from the Professional Library Service that met with the Director to consider Personnel Rating Sheets.)

THE QUESTION MARK

Published by the Boston Public Library Professional Staff Association

Vol. II May 1947 No. 5

EDITOR'S CORNER

We had heard that the pigeons were in disfavor in the hallowed precincts of City Hall, but were surprised when this disfavor caused them to develop a literary bent. Possibly they have invaded Bates Hall to do research in an effort to prove their title to the Common and the City Hall area. This, we suspect is the reason for their lurking in the History Department. They are out to prove their descent from the pigeons (if any) that accampanied the Winthrop Fleet to Boston's fair shore. Else why should our genealogists favor them and remark with pleasure on the fact that we are not superstitious and don't object to birds in the house? We may not be superstitious, but ...

We await with eagerness the appearance in our catalogue of the 1946 edition of John Pfiffner's "Public Administration", New York, The Ronald Press. In this, according to a review we have recently seen "... the author explodes a theory that employees should see themselves as management sees them by reviewing service ratings covering their own jobs. 'When actual flesh-and-blood workers see their own ratings making individual defects a matter of record, however, the reaction is too often one of resentment rather than inspiration to self-improvement.'" Many in the Library are probably at the moment feeling if not resentful, aggrieved, to say the least. The pigeons, who after all can move around a little more freely than we, have left their genealogical studies long enough to report that many comments on the new personnel ratings are to be expected momentarily. We shall be glad to see them come, because certainly at the present there seems to be confusion in most of our minds as to what norm is to be established and as to what they will eventually mean to us.

*

The Benefit Association is to be congratulated not only on its forty-fifth anniversary, but on the most enjoyable party they gave at the Puritan on the twenty-second to celebrate the occasion. We were pleasantly surprised at the amount of talent in the library staff, and enjoyed the comments of our Trustees Mr. Masterson and Mr. Buxton.

*

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Due to an oversight on the part of the Chair, Mr. Rains' report of the Membership Committee was not read at the Business Meeting of the Association on Friday, May 23. The report follows:

During the first quarter of 1947 invitations to join the Association were sent to all eligible employees of the Library. This drive resulted in the addition of over sixty new members. Due to resignations from the Library during the first half of the year the net gain amounted to fifty, making the present total three hundred and fifty-three.

For the remainder of the year, the Committee plans to continue the membership drive and to attempt to set up a system of field representatives in branches and departments in accordance with the recent decision of the Executive Board.

Respectfully submitted,
SIGNED:
Louis Rains, Chairman
Membership Committee

*

Teacher: (Sitting at a table near the door). This table is too low.

Librarian: Try the middle table. It is higher.

Teacher: All over the country--even in the most rural districts--there are signs on the bridges announcing the heights for clearance. Why don't you put up a sign here?

Librarian: Why don't you make us a sign?

A few days later the Teacher handed us the following:

Suggested rhymes,
Attempting to spare
Other knees from becoming
Like my own smashed pair!

(Composed after the author had attempted to pull up a chair and sit down at the nearest table in the Teachers' Room of the Boston Public Library. The selected verse will be printed and placed upon said table to warn newcomers that the Librarians are not liable for any fractures, sprains, contusions, or abrasions sustained by anyone attempting to park a pair of legs beneath it).

Suggestion no. 1

If at least two feet is the height of your lap,
Then this blasted table is your booby trap!

Suggestion no. 2

Don't sit down fast, I warn you fella,
Or you'll soon have a smashed patella!

Suggestion no. 3

If you have legs like Betty Grable
Don't ever come near this so-called table!

Suggestion no. 4

Pull up at this table as fast as you please
But afterwards, what'll you use for knees?
So if you seek to read or study,
Then sit down slow and easy, Buddy!

Sign to be posted near entrance:

LOOK OUT BELOW!

Some dashed in here to study their books
And smashed their knees before they looks.
So if you'd avoid that painful feeling
Then LIE on the table and study the ceiling,
For the ceiling-painter was gifted and clever
But the table-maker will be cursed forever!!

*

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY EMPLOYEES UNION LOCAL 731

Though turned down by the State Legislature, Senate Bill 405 has begun to show results. One of these was a meeting called on May 6th by the Massachusetts Free Public Library Commissioners. Representatives of the Massachusetts Library Association were invited, as were representatives of the Union. A discussion of the general subject of state aid was followed by the report of Mr. Lord, chairman of the M.L.A. committee on state aid, who gave first-hand observations of the workings of the Michigan State Aid Law. The meeting then voted unanimously to set up a Massachusetts State Aid for Libraries' Conference. It was also voted that a joint committee of the three groups begin work on a bill for state aid which will be ready for submission to the next session of the State Legislature.

*

After a number of conferences with representatives of the Boston Council of Municipal Employees (which consists of 24 locals, including Local 731), Mayor Curley sent to all Department Heads Circular Letter, No. 4. This letter announces the setting up of a Labor Management Committee which is to hear and review "Grievances on the part of employees with regard to classification, hours of employment and other related matters."

*

Abraham H. Kalish has been appointed to the Education Committee of the Massachusetts State Federation of Labor.

*

NOMINATING COMMITTEE B.P.L.P.S.A.

Members of the Nominating Committee recently appointed at an Executive Board meeting are:

Miss Esther Leonard, Teachers Department.
Miss Anne L. Moore, Open Shelf Department.
Miss Rose DiPasquale, North End Branch.
Miss Marion R. Herzig, Roslindale Branch.
Mr. Joseph Lynch, Book Preparation Department.

*

LUNCHEON IN HONOR OF MISS MARY FLORENCE CUFFLIN

On Saturday afternoon, May 3rd, eighty friends gathered in the Lagoon Room of the Myles Standish Hotel at a luncheon given in honor of Miss Mary Florence Cufflin upon her retirement from the Library service. Mrs. Ada Andelman was toastmistress for the occasion, and introduced Mr. Milton Lord, the Director, and Miss Edith Guerrier, Supervisor of Branch Libraries, Emeritus, both of whom brought greetings to Miss Cufflin, and spoke with warm appreciation of her work and worth through the years.

Miss Bessie Doherty, who had been asked to reminisce a bit, spoke substantially as follows:

It is said that the ocean holds waters too deep for accurate soundings, and it is true, also, that the heart holds emotions too deep for adequate words. When from time to time I have been asked to write or say a few words of appreciation for one of my fellow workers who was leaving the Library service, it has always been done with the sincere prayer, 'I hope they will never ask me to do this for Miss Cufflin.'

I wished that, in some miraculous way, the day of her retirement from the service would never come; and I knew that all of the respect, the deep appreciation, and the very real affection which I have for Miss Cufflin could never be expressed in words, either prose or poetry. Nevertheless, since the Committee has so graciously asked me to speak, I am very glad to add my words of appreciation to those which have already been spoken. I consider it the greatest blessing of my library career that I came into the service in time to be trained by Miss Cufflin. There was a

day, which few of you will remember, when there was no Training Class, no courses of study, and no bewildering steps--one-two-three-four-five--upon which to stub one's literary toes. We looked to Miss Cufflin, and to her alone, for our training and while, just in the nature of things, it was not possible for her to give us a completely rounded-out course in all the branches of Library Science; she did give us those things without which even the best course in Library Science would be worse than useless. She taught us the importance of careful, detailed, painstaking work; she imparted to us something of her own devotion to the library as an institution; and, in her, we had always before us an example of the highest type of service to the public.

Let no one imagine, even for a moment, that working for Miss Cufflin was easy. It was not! She had a most disconcerting habit of refusing to accept anything but the very best; and in some uncanny way, she sensed the highest capabilities of each and every one entrusted to her for training. More often than not, that higher best which she demanded was greater than anything of which we dreamed we were capable. Thinking back to those old days, I am reminded of an incident which occurred while I was working in Stack 4. It was the duty of each girl serving in that particular stack to verify five alcoves of books each morning. Those alcoves became one's special responsibility, and the books were expected to be kept in order at all times. One never knew just when these small provinces would be invaded, and one's work inspected by Miss Cufflin. And, strange as it may seem, if there were any books out of place, they seemed to choose such times to make themselves most conspicuous. On the particular day in question, I heard Miss Cufflin calling, "Miss Doherty!" Instantly I was on the alert, knowing that something was wrong. Otherwise I would have been summoned with the more informal "Bess!" which signified that all was well. I lost no time in tracing Miss Cufflin's voice to my alcoves, where I soon discovered what was wrong. I was met with the accusing words, 'Miss Doherty, I just stopped by to run my eye over your alcoves, and I find two books out of place. I've left them sticking out so that you may see them, and put them where they belong.'

Even while my lips were saying, 'I'm sorry, Miss Cufflin,' my face must have said very clearly, 'Only two out of five alcoves, I must be getting good.' My self-satisfaction was short lived, however, for Miss Cufflin, sensing my reaction, hastened to admonish me, 'Oh, yes, I know you're thinking that two books out of five alcoves aren't many--but think of it this way. Those books might have been needed by two borrowers today and those two borrowers would have left our library disappointed because we had failed to give them what they wanted.'...

While it was not easy to work for Miss Cufflin, it was a joyous and satisfactory experience always ... Miss Cufflin, being human, must have had her favorites among the girls who worked for her, but, if so, we never knew anything about it. She treated us all with straightforward fairness, and I, for one, thought of her as a very wise and very dear older sister, who was never too tired, too busy or too uninterested to give of herself, her time, and her wisdom to me ... And now:

What shall I wish for the years just ahead--
Time of rich fruitage toward which life has led.
I, who know well how deserved is your rest,
Sound the depths of my heart for the richest and best
Harvest of thought, coin to lavishly spend
In extravagant wishes for you, my dear friend.
As always, I'm claiming life's best gifts for you--
Good health, peace, and friends who are loyal and true.

Are you yearning to travel in far away lands?
I'll gather fair wishes to weave into strands
Of friendliest magic to carpet your way
With harmony, paving your steps every day.
And I'll ask Good Dame Fortune to give of her gold--
Not too much, for it can prove a burden, I'm told;
Not too little, lest there should be nothing to share
With someone less fortunate, needing your care.

And when your own hearth fire's fingers of flame
Beckon you back to the homeland again:
To places you've loved, and old friends who are dear;
And things you have cherished through many a year--
To the joys you have shared, the cares and the chores--
Somehow grown precious because they are yours;
May you find every seedling of kindness you've sown
Has blossomed to fragrance right there in your home.

Miss Fanny Goldstein, Librarian of the West End Branch, and long-time friend and colleague of Miss Cufflin, prefaced her speech of presentation with a sparkling account of their long association in library activities. The gifts, a beautifully bound book, red leather trimmed with gold, containing the names of Miss Cufflin's library friends and a matching red billfold, holding a crisp new one hundred dollar bill, were accepted in a gracious speech by Miss Cufflin.

Everyone present agreed that the Committee on arrangements, headed by Miss Margaret Calnan, Branch Librarian of the Connolly Branch, should be congratulated on one of the most enjoyable library parties ever given; and they further conceded that our guest of honor most richly deserved the best.

*

PERSONAL NOTES

New Staff Members

Miss Ida A. Lubell, Personnel Office.

Miss Mildred D. Brackett, City Point Branch, where she has been working part-time.

Miss Patricia L. Keegan, Information Office, where she has been working part-time.

Miss Leontine M. Milano, Cataloging and Classification Department, Reference Division.

Miss Phyllis M. Racette, Book Stack Service.

Miss Patricia R. Taylor, Book Stack Service.

Miss Jacqueline Steiner, Rare Book Department.

Resignations

Mrs. Doris L. Montgomery, Uphams Corner Branch.

Miss Anne C. Magner, Book Stack Service.

Miss Pearl Stern, Business Branch.

Miss Gloria L. Lombard, Cataloging and Classification Department, Reference Division.

Mrs. Florence H. Posella, History Department.

*

STATE AID TO LIBRARIES AS PRESENTED AT THE MASSACHUSETTS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING AT PITTSFIELD, MAY 16, 1947

The speaker on state aid to libraries was Miss Eudocia Stratton, for three years Director of State Aid to Public Libraries, Michigan. Introduced by Miss Yerxa of the Massachusetts Division of Public Libraries as an expert in this subject, Miss Stratton responded by saying that an expert was only "an ordinary guy away from home." She qualified under this definition, being a long way from Lansing, Michigan, but she also would qualify, probably, according to

the definition given in the dictionary. She knew the Michigan law and the many details of administering state aid as well as the general theory of state aid. Since this state and one other are the only states to give aid to libraries in general, its law is of particular inter- to librarians of Massachusetts. Sixteen states in all have state aid laws but fourteen of them provide aid only to county and regional libraries.

Before analyzing the Michigan law she spoke of the principles behind the idea. The public library as a part of the educational system is the concern of the state. The Michigan state constitution had included the word libraries as well as schools, many years back, so the recent law in that state only put this principle into practice. The aim of such a law is to equalize the library opportunities throughout the state.

First passed in 1937, the Michigan law was not put into effect at once due to a deficit and before it really got much under way, was amended by the recommendation of the Michigan Library Association in 1941. The amendments provided for two things. The first provision required that the apportionment of funds must conform to such certification requirements for personnel as might be established by the State Board for Libraries. The other amendment removed the clause in the bill setting the appropriation at a fixed amount. More money was asked for in 1941 than the original bill had set.

To be eligible to receive state aid a libra ry must first of all be free to the public and open at least ten hours a week. Beyond this there are specific financial and educational qualifications. The municipality or other government unit must provide a proportion of the budget. The educational standard, as the amendment indicated, is set by the State Board for Libraries. For example, in a community with a population larger than 15,000 the head of the library must be a library school graduate with at least four years experience, and a large percent of the members of the staff must come from accredited library schools. State certification is required and renewed biennially. Any library not wishing to fulfill these requirements may waive its rights to receive aid.

The appropriation in Michigan was divided into several funds:

1) The General Fund, now using 60 per cent of the total, for distribution on a per capita basis to all libraries meeting the financial and educational qualifications.

2) The Equalization Fund, using 10 per cent of the total, for purposes of helping libraries that might not receive enough from the property tax to maintain standards.

3) An Establishment Fund provides for aid in establishing new libraries. At least $6,000 must be set for the purpose by the governmental unit before aid may be obtained.

4) Other funds for demonstration and improvement purposes. To be eligible for money from the Improvement Fund there must be a population of 15,000 or an area of any population comprising two counties put together. The district must also reserve for the library a certain percentage of the assessed evaluation. Money from state funds might be spent on bookmobiles, for salaries, for demonstrations, for anything to improve the worth of the library to the public served.

Of the whole appropriation a small percent must be set aside for administering the funds.

For more detailed information, see the forthcoming Massachusetts Library Association Bulletin which will have a full report of Miss Stratton's talk.

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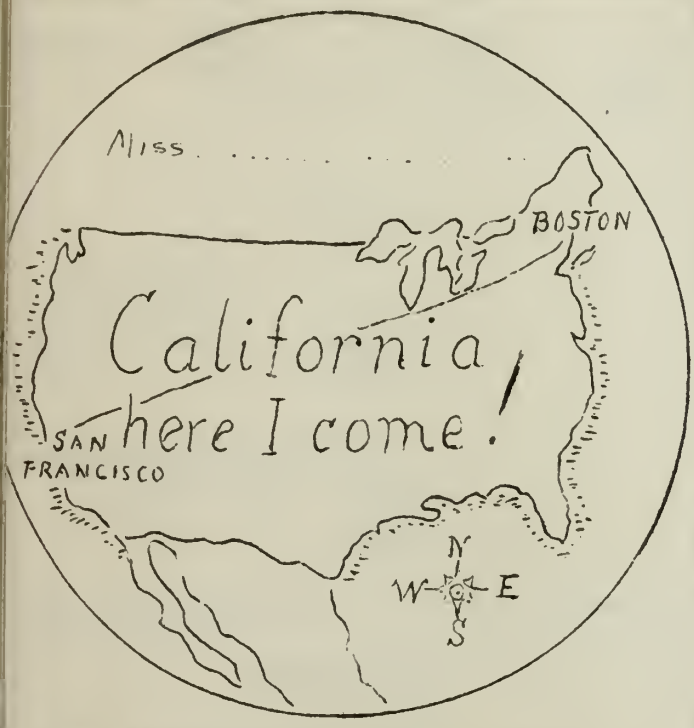
Published by the Boston Public Library Professional Staff Association

Vol. II June-July 1947 No. 6



The Women's Lounge was the scene of a very festive occasion on Tuesday afternoon, June tenth, when the "STAY-AT-HOMERS", those poor, unfortunate souls who did not go to California, were at home to their more fortunate colleagues, the twenty-five hardy souls who ventured forth into the wide, open spaces of the West to attend the A.L.A. Convention in San Francisco, June twenty-ninth to July fifth. The room looked very festive with bouquets of garden flowers, candlelight, and center table bearing a well-filled punch bowl and plates of homemade cakes and cookies.

Between three and four-thirty o'clock practically all members of the Central Library staff, as well as a goodly representation from Branch Libraries came to enjoy a social few minutes and to wish their fellow staff members Godspoed on their trip. Mr. Lord and his "harem", each properly identified by an attractive orange name card (reproduced above), seemed to be in fine condition for the trip and were able to stand up with fortitude under the avalanche of good wishes, good food, good drink, and even the eagle eye of a photographer.

*

EDITOR'S CORNER

The editor heartily endorsos the recommendation of the Executive Board that the scope of the Question Mark be enlarged to include the listing of articles of professional interest, and reports of "things done" in various departments and branch libraries. With the September issue we shall expand in this direction, and also announce our enlarged committee.

We hope also that some of the lucky ones who attended the A.L.A. convention at San Francisco will favor us with an account of what went on there and an account of what is fun in California. We certainly envied you all the past few weeks. But just you wait until we've had our vacation! The old Q. Mark will positively crackle in your hand, she'll be so sprightly!

Speaking of broadening the scope of the Q. Mark, your editor wishes to remind you that contributions are always gratefully received from any member of the Staff, and they don't necessarily have to be letters to the "Soap Box". If you know any interesting news, let us in on it. If anything amusing happens around here, do tell us. We are only too anxious to pass the word along. Thank you!

*

During the asking of the Tello-Test question "In what state are the Finger Lakes?", one branch library received this telephone query; "Will you please tell me in what city are the Ginger Lakes?"

*

We understand that since the United Nations Charter was signed a book store in San Francisco has been selling world globes at a 50 percent reduction.

*

Report on Sale of POPS tickets

$1.50	Sold.....	23	
	Returned.....	10	33
$1.00	Sold.....	243	
	Returned.....	24	267
			300

Receipts

Tickets Sold:

23 @ $1.75.....	$40.25
243 @ $1.25.....	303.75
266	$344.00

Contributions Received:

18 @ 25¢.....	$4.50
1 @ 10¢.....	.10
	$4.60

Total Receipts..... $348.60

Expenditures

Paid to Symphony Hall for Tickets Sold:

23 @ $1.50.....	$34.50
243 @ $1.00.....	243.00
266	$277.50

Paid Government Tax:
266 tickets
@ 4¢..... $10.64

Total Expenditures..... 288.14

Net Profit to BPLPSA.... $60.46

Respectfully submitted,

DOROTHY F. NOURSE
Program Chairman

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THE SOAP BOX

June 10, 1947

To the Executive Board:

So large a number of the employees are audibly wishing that "Someone would write a letter to the Question Mark about the various criticisms of, or suggestions for improvement in the personality rating scale lately adopted by the administration," that it would seem to be a service well within the field of the Professional Staff Association to appoint a committee to hear and examine these remarks with a view to recommending changes to the administration.

The grading has not been at all uniform within the system, and too many employees seem to be dissatisfied with the details of the rating sheets...for example, some would prefer various qualities to carry varied weights if a total average must be assigned. Therefore, I suggest that the Executive Board:

1. Establish a slotted box in the staff library for anonymous complaints on the present rating system, the box to remain in place until September 15.

2. Send out a notice requesting that suggestions be sent to the President before August 30 for membership on a staff committee to study the problem.

3. Appoint before September 10 from these names a committee of 10 to 15 representative employees to study the present rating system, examine the comments of the employees thereon, study the rating systems in use in other libraries, and present a report with recommendations for change to the first business meeting of the Association in the fall.

*

PERSONAL NOTES

Announcement has been made of the engagement of Irene T. Bixler, Information Office, to Joseph H. Lyons. No date has been set for the wedding.

Mary Louise Hart, formerly in Mr. Davis' Office, was married to Thomas Canavan on Saturday, June 14, in Hyde Park.

Mr. and Mrs. James Yauney (Edna Quinn, formerly of the Office of Records, Files, and Statistics) announce the birth of a son, Bruce David, on July 16.

Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Marcus (Joyce Chaban, formerly of Book Stack Service) announce the birth of a son, Lawrence Richard, on July 23.

Henry Barry, Book Preparation Department, is receiving congratulations upon the birth of a son, Robert Francis, on June 5.

Mr. and Mrs. Peter A. Lentini (Mary Keegan, formerly of the Stock Purchasing Department) announce the birth of a son, Peter Alfred, on June 28.

*

THE CHARACTER OF THE 90% MAN AFTER THEOPHRASTUS

He cometh to work at 8:50 every morning with brief case under his arm. The brief case doth contain those things which he hath labored over at home the eve preceding. He dusteth lightly at his shoes, lest their pristine gleam be marred, and then he dusteth lightly over the surface of his desk whereat he hath wrought yesterday and will work today. He hath a charming grin for his companions and a deferential smirk for ye Chief. He starteth the days work betimes, lest he have no time to seek out other work. He goeth over the work of his fellows, and what they have left undone, he doeth and what they have done, he redoeth. He tarrieth at his desk when the noon time cometh and returneth from lunch early. He taketh vitamin pills on his relief and his relief it is brief. He boweth from the waist at the public and his hand he kisseth to the ladies. He weareth at all times a comely smile on his countenance. He sheweth his cooperation by linking his hands with those of his fellow-workers, and his initiative by directing them when to shew their hands. He organizeth small groups within his ken and holdeth professional meetings. In the evenings doth he work many overtimes and when he goeth home, he carrieth again the brief case wherein to work during the night. (His wife is ill-fed, ill-housed, ill-clothed and in consequence thereof, ill-tempered.) He leaveth home to attend many meetings, but he returneth early lest he have not his proper complement of rest. He refuseth tobacco and strong waters. He is the 90% man.

*

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY PROFESSIONAL STAFF ASSOCIATION

June 13, 1947.

Dear Mr. Lord:

I have been authorized by the Executive Board to forward the report of the Special Committee on Concession Planning to you for consideration.

Although this committee was originally instructed to draw up a definitive plan and contract for setting up a concession within the Central Library, it was the unanimous decision of the present Executive Board that the Association was not empowered to take such action. For this reason, the committee's instructions were amended and confined to making an exploratory study with recommendations based on its findings.

In view of the problems which have arisen in the course of the committee's investigations, it is also the belief of the Board that the Association is not in a position, at the present time, to accept responsibility for setting up and operating a concession if empowered to do so. As such an undertaking may involve questions of legal procedure, liability, employment and the handling of funds, the Board believes that these are matters which can be more properly and efficiently handled by the Administration.

It is now the understanding of the Executive Board that if a concession were set up on a percentage basis with part of the profits accruing to the Association, as was the original idea, these profits could be derived only from increased cost of food to the staff. However, since the concession would be for the use of the entire staff, and not merely for members of the Association, the Executive Board believes that it would not be justified in approving the recommendation of such an arrangement.

The members of the Board will be glad to discuss with you any questions which may arise concerning this report. They will also be happy to cooperate in every way possible with the Administration in carrying out the expressed wish of the staff in this matter.

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) Louisa S. Metcalf
President

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON CONCESSION PLANNING

The Special Committee on Concession Planning, to which was referred the question of planning the setting up of a concession within the Library for serving light refreshments to men and women members of the staff, submits the following report.

In the spring of 1946, the present chairman was informally requested to investigate certain of the problems connected with such a venture. In November, 1946, he was verbally notified of his appointment as chairman of the committee, and on January 2, 1947, he received written instructions from the Executive Board directing him to appoint a committee to serve with him to work out a definite plan and contract for setting up a concession, to be submitted to the Executive Board, to Mr. Connolly, and to the Director, for approval. The following members of the staff were named to serve with the chairman of the committee: Harry Fletcher, Anna L. Manning, and Phoebe S. McDonough.

In March, 1947, a poll of all full-time members of the staff in the Central Library building was conducted to determine (1) how many were in favor of setting up the concession, (2) how often individuals would buy if a concession were set up, and (3) what items of food they would buy.

In addition to answers to specific questions, comments were sought from members of the staff in this poll.

Questionnaires were distributed to 318 members of the staff. Of this number 219 were returned. Not all questions were answered by those returning their questionnaires. A summary of the poll is given below.

Number of questionnaires sent out---318
Number returned----------219

Question 1. Do you feel that this concession should be set up?
Yes----------176
No---------- 29

Question 2. How often would you buy?
Every day----------104
Once a week---------- 7
Occasionally---------- 74

Question 3. What would you buy?
Soups---------- 95
Sandwiches----------124
Desserts and ice cream-------157
Beverages----------160

The comments were varied, but the majority of them fell into three main categories: (1) inadequate space in the present lunchroom in Stack II, (2) the likelihood of attracting such pests as roaches and rodents if food were not removed, and (3) the possibility of interfering with the privileges of members of the staff who bring their own lunches.

As the majority of those returning the questionnaires indicated their approval of establishing a concession, the committee next wrote to five concessionaires, requesting them to make a survey of the facilities available in the lunchroom in Stack II to determine if there were adequate space for serving the number of employees which it had been estimated would patronize the concession, and if they were interested to submit written statements of their terms.

Of the five concessionaires to whom letters were sent, two were not interested, Joseph J. Doyle of Dorchester and McKeon and Casby of Boston. The remaining three indicated their interest in the proposal and statements from them are submitted with this report. They are:

Commercial Canteen Service
10A Milton Avenue, Dorchester 24.

James H. Fitzgerald
17 Flavin Street, Dorchester.

Women's Educational & Industrial Union
264 Boylston Street, Boston 16.

Representatives from the first two of these firms surveyed the premises with the three previously mentioned objections of the staff in mind: (1) inadequate space, (2) the pest hazard, and (3) possible interference with privileges at present enjoyed by the staff.

Each estimated that with a rearrangement of the tables, with additional chairs and tables to be supplied by the Library, approximately 90 persons could be accomodated at one time. This number, it had been estimated on the basis of returns from the poll, would be the maximum potential using the lunchroom at each period.

Both firms pointed out that the daily removal of food not consumed would minimize the danger of attracting pests such as roaches and rodents.

The committee was also assured by these firms that the installation of their service would in no way obligate persons using the lunchroom to purchase food, or otherwise have their privileges interfered with.

The following arrangements may be made with the concessionaires regarding the serving of food. If a concessionaire takes over the whole enterprise, it will entail his furnishing at his expense the services of a counterman with subsequently higher prices to the staff. If, however, the Library agrees to arrange for the purchase of food and has it served by one of its employees, the prices will be lower.

The Commercial Canteen Service would supply the food and necessary equipment daily and would make financial arrangements with the Library for the services of a counterman to be employed by the Library. Mr. James H. Fitzgerald would set up the concession with his wife as operator, supplying food and necessary equipment. The Women's Educational and Industrial Union would make no arrangement for serving food, but would supply it daily, leaving the problem of service to the Library.

On the basis of its investigations the Committee makes the following recommendations:

(1) That a concession be set up, as an experiment, by the Administration, in Stack II with a clause in the contract to be drawn up with the concessionaire permitting the termination of the contract at any time with the mutual consent of the contracting parties.

(2) That since a survey has revealed that adequate space is available in the lunchroom in Stack II, no further changes be made until time has shown the need.

(3) That, because of the variety of food offered and the nature of the service provided, the contract be awarded either to the Commercial Canteen Service or to Mr. James H. Fitzgerald.

(4) That a token payment be made whereby the city be reimbursed for the light, water and other expenses incurred, but that any further profit be applied, as far as possible, to lowering prices and improving the quality of the food served.

The committee wishes to thank the Executive Board for its cooperation.

(Signed) GERALD BALL, Chairman
HARRY FLETCHER
ANNA L. MANNING
PHOEBE S. MCDONOUGH

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NEW TITLES RECEIVED IN THE STAFF LIBRARY

A.L.A. Subcommittee on civil service relations. Civil service and libraries.

Adams, Henry. The formative years.

Allen, Robert. Our fair city.

Bernanos, Georges. Joy.

Collins, Norman. Dulcimer Street.

Dostoyevsky, Feodor. Crime and punishment.

Dostoyevsky, Feodor. The possessed.

*Flaubert, Gustave. Madame Bovary.

Freedman, Benedict. Mrs. Mike.

Graham, Elinor. Maine charm string.

Gray, James. On second thought.

Harrison, Joseph L. Forbes Library: the half century, 1894-1944.

*Joyce, James. The portable James Joyce.

*Lowry, Malcolm. Under the volcano.

Lydenberg, Harry Miller, and John Archer. Care and repair of books.

Kilvert, Robert. Kilvert's diary.

Ross, Nancy Wilson. The left hand is the dreamer.

Sevareid, Eric. Not so wild a dream.

Tolstoi, Leo. Anna Karenina

Toynbee, Arnold. Study of history.

Walker, Mildred. The quarry.

Waugh, Evelyn. Handful of dust.

*Wellman, Paul. Walls of Jericho.

*Kept in locked cabinet. May be obtained by applying at Personnel Office.

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TO THE JUNE-JULY 1947 ISSUE OF THE QUESTION MARK:

The Executive Board advocates the inclusion of two new columns as regular features in the Question Mark.

One column would carry suggestions for improvement in service to the public and also reports of "things done". In this column there would be an exchange of ideas between the departments and branch libraries. An idea proven successful in one unit of the library might be helpful to another.

The second column would contain a selected list of articles of professional nature appearing in any publication. This list might contain about ten items.

Both of these columns should prove stimulating to the members of the staff.

The Board presents these suggestions to the Publications Committee and further recommends that the committee be enlarged to handle the work which these two columns would entail.

(Signed) Eleanor F. Halligan
Secretary.

THE QUESTION MARK

Published by the Boston Public Library Professional Staff Association

Vol. II August-September 1947 No. 7

EDITOR'S CORNER

The biggest excitement of the summer months in these parts has been the announcement of the Deferrari gift to the Library. We are fortunate indeed to have found so munificent a benefactor. In a day when wealthy men are devoting their benefactions to a care for the physical needs of humanity it is rare to find a man who remembers that the intellectual needs of the community in which he lives also need to be satisfied.

This gift will benefit the Library by helping it to maintain its position among the world's great libraries, and through the Library will profit the entire city of Boston which the Library serves. On the more personal level, we as employees of the Library have cause for jubilation in this gift. We need not mention the better working conditions which the lack of crowding due to a program of building expansion will bring to some of us. They are only too obvious. Less obvious, but none the less real, will be the increased opportunity for professional development and increased ability to serve the public which endowment will make possible for all of us who help make it work, in no matter what capacity. Mr. Deferrari has indeed been a benefactor to us all.

*

CONGRATULATIONS!!

And congratulations to Mr. John J. Connolly who has just been appointed a member of the Board of Trustees of the New York Polyclinic Medical School and Hospital.

*

PERSONAL NOTES

New Staff Members

Roger P. Bristol, Cataloging and Classification Department, Reference Division.

Mrs. Myra M. Provo, Cataloging and Classification Department, Reference Division.

Mrs. Jane K. Potter, Fine Arts Department.

Barbara M. Dydek, Print Department.

Ellen M. Donahue, Book Stack Service.

Jean D. Lamb, Rare Book Department.

F. Carolyn Doyle, Cataloging and Classification Department, Reference Division.

George J. Lazar, Book Stack Service.

Nicholas Nichols, Book Stack Service.

Mary L. Robertson, Rare Book Department.

Katherine M. Kiely, South End Branch Library.

Mary L. Duran, Charlestown Branch Library.

Ruth M. Gomes, Dorchester Branch Library.

Engagements, Marriages, and Births

Announcement has been made of the engagement of Palmira Piciulo, Cataloging and Classification Department, Reference Division, to Chester A. S. Fazakas, Branch Issue Department.

Iphigenia Loomis, Jeffries Point Branch Library, was married to Louis Fillios on June 15, 1947.

Rita Howley, Connolly Branch Library, was married to John G. Fitzgerald on August 9, 1947.

Molly Tansman, Mattapan Branch Library, was married to Jack Terban on September 7, 1947.

Mr. and Mrs. William Morrissey (formerly Beatrice Gould, Parker Hill Branch Library) announce the birth of a daughter, born September 9, 1947.

Transfers

Marie E. Murphy, Charlestown Branch Library to Parker Hill Branch Library.

Resignations

Honor McCusker, Rare Book Department, to accept the position of Librarian, Information Library, The Hague, The Netherlands.

Virginia McAvoy, Science and Technology Department, to work in a special library at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Jean Bruce, Roslindale Branch Library, to attend Simmons.

Edward J. Niland, Periodical and Newspaper Department, to accept a teaching position in the Law School, Santa Clara University, California.

Ruth Fishburne, Mt. Bowdoin Branch Library, to accept another library position in New York City.

Dorothy Tierney, City Point Branch Library, to accept a position in the U. S. Navy Line School Library, Newport, Rhode Island.

Ida A. Lubell, Personnel Office, to attend secretarial school.

Mrs. Marcella McConville, Business Branch Library, moving away from Boston.

Mrs. Phoebe S. McDonough, General Reference Department, to remain at home.

Mrs. Jane Jeffers, Print Department, to remain at home.

William Faherty, Business Office, to enter army.

Returned from Military Service

George E. Earley, General Reference Department.

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HONOR MCCUSKER

While we are all no doubt envious of the opportunity to see the world which Miss McCusker's new position offers her, there can be no doubt in anyone's mind as to her high qualifications for the post which she is about to assume as Librarian at The Hague. With a Ph.D. in English Literature from Bryn Mawr and eleven years experience in the Rare Book Department of the Boston Public Library, not to mention a wide background in European languages, it would be hard to find a person better fitted for the position. At the Library we shall all feel her loss. She is a loss not only to her department but also to her colleagues who have profited by her ever ready help and by contact with a mind at once scholarly and in tune with the problems and interests of those with whom she worked. The Question Mark is also in her debt for the fine work she did as the first chairman of the Publications Committee and Editor of our paper. Our best wishes go with her.

*

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

The chairman of the Publications Committee wishes to announce the names of the now expanded committee as follows:

Mary Daly, Statistical Department.

Charles L. Higgins, General Reference Department.

Pauline Winnick, Codman Square Branch Library.

Sarah W. Flannery, History Department, Chairman.

It is with regret that we announce the resignation of Mrs. Phoebe S. McDonough who has assisted us so ably and patiently since the beginning of the year.

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STAFF LIBRARY

Those of you who have suggestions for books for the Staff Library may leave your ideas (or the expression of them on paper) in a box which will be provided for the purpose in the Staff Library. Branch people may send in their suggestions in care of Miss Editha Ewing, Personnel Office. If you wish to have the kind of books you want to read in the library the best way to do so is to write in your own suggestions. Remember it is your library for your pleasure and benefit. So speak up and the Library Committee assures us that they are only too anxious to have a library that will represent and serve the interests and tastes of all.

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A.L.A. CONVENTION FOOTNOTES

Last June some travelling librarians headed for the wild and wooly West. They set off in small groups, two, three, four or sometimes more. They started off on different days on different schedules, but with itineraries clutched tightly in hand, they arrived at the Conference together--strangely enough. These small caravans weighted down with various paraphernalia had diverse experiences. Needless to say, various articles of clothing were lost here and there, trains were delayed by floods, one group was stranded in the desert, others spent a sleepless night waiting for train berths that were already occupied only to arrive sleepy-eyed at a hotel that had lost their reservations. Many had thoughtfully planned their wardrobe for months in advance, dutifully packing cottons for California and woolens for the great Northwest. The cottons had an enjoyable American tour inside trunks and only came to light when unpacked on a typical tropical July day--back in Boston. Suitcases were early casualties. It was heartwarming to see the fervor with which porters tossed shining new wardrobe cases on cement platforms whence they bounced merrily into the arms of the station porter--a man who usually wasn't there.

One interesting group had managed to have reservations in a San Francisco hotel of the super class A rating. For one week they would enjoy the luxury and sumptuous living of those who cut coupons instead of bookjackets as a chore. The great day arrived. They were ushered into the lush hotel lobby. They prayed fervently that the reservations had been held. The hotel clerk clicked his fingers, bellhops sprang into action, and off they marched Indian fashion down the first corridor. At the end of this lengthy hike they were ushered into an elevator, and down, down they went to another corridor, down another elevator another corridor until they reached subterranean depths. There were the long awaited rooms--cubicles painted in a sickly green with room for only one person--standing. Weary from the long journey through the hotel they were too tired to protest. During the ensuing days, they spent many hours in the upper lobbies, shops and cafés, but at night like veritable Cinderellas with map and compass they laboriously made their way back to their tiny cubicles.

Some early birds went to a typical California Breakfast on the Air and found themselves rewarded with flowers and candy for their brilliant and witty repartee. One member casually sat down in a dining car and found herself sitting with none other than Alan Ladd! Happily many discovered their fellow workers were quite charming people to live with; as yet, no broken bones, hair-pulling nor hysteria has been reported.

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RECENT MATERIAL OF PROFESSIONAL INTEREST

To those who have not yet seen the revived HARVARD LIBRARY BULLETIN (Periodical Room) we recommend very strongly an examination of the two 1947 issues. The BULLETIN is unique in current library literature. Although it naturally will have its strongest appeal to university librarians, many of its articles and notes have a general appeal, if only by extension. See particularly Spatial growth in university libraries by Keyes D. Metcalf in the Spring number.

The latest issue of the JOURNAL OF DOCUMENTATION, June 1947 (Periodical Room) carries a short but interesting article titled The Library of Congress printed cards; some suggested improvements. These suggestions are from a British librarian and supplement many of the recent ideas on this subject.

An excellent exposition of the National plan for public library service by J. S. Richards is to be found in the latest number of the A.L.A. BULLETIN. This is an attempt to coordinate public library service on a national basis and it embodies the latest concepts in library planning. Optimistic as the plan may seem to some, a program such as this article outlines will be needed to provide library service to the thirty-five million Americans now without such service.

C.L.H.

Further articles:

Kirstein Library, an important help to business men, by James J. Canavan, in BOSTON BUSINESS, June 1947, p. 109.

The A.E.S. library takes the plunge (reclassification), by C. C. Campbell, in SPECIAL LIBRARIES, v. 37, p. 315-317, December 1946.

Microfilm cataloging lacks system, by H. J. Jones and J. Hagen, in LIBRARY JOURNAL, v. 72, p. 505-507, April 1, 1947.

Undergraduate courses in Library Science, Board of Education for Librarianship, A.L.A. BULLETIN, March 1947. A reply to this is in the September BULLETIN, entitled Directions in Library Education.

*

COMMITTEE TO STUDY PERSONNEL SERVICE RATING

At the meeting of the Executive Board of the Professional Staff Association on September 17 it was decided to have a committee to study the personnel service rating.

The duties of this committee as set down in the minutes of the Board meeting are: "to study the personnel rating system, examine the comments of the employees thereon, study the rating systems in use and as used in other libraries and to present a report with recommendations for changes at the first business meeting of the Association in the Fall."

The members appointed to this committee are:

Aaron A. Starr, Book Purchasing Department.

Ellen G. McGrath, Information Office.

Diulia Capobianco, North End Branch Library.

Dorothy Shaw, Periodical and Newspaper Department.

Marjorie Gibbons, Washington Village Branch Library.

Mildred C. O'Connor, Cataloging and Classification Department, Reference Division.

George Earley, General Reference Department.

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QUESTION MARK TO RETIRED MEMBERS

Considering the request of a retired member of the staff to receive the QUESTION MARK each month, the Executive Board passed the following motion:

> "that the Chairman of the Publication Committee draw up a list of retired members of the Association to receive the Question Mark on request and that the Chairman of this Committee be reimbursed by the Treasurer for the Postage."

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THE QUESTION MARK

Published by the Boston Public Library Professional Staff Association

Vol. II October 1947 No. 8

OPEN LETTER TO THE DIRECTOR

Dear Mr. Lord:

At a recent meeting of the Executive Board of the Professional Staff Association I was authorized to forward for your consideration tentative recommendations for a proposed expansion of the Library's in-service training program.

As it was recognized by the Board that the present program aims primarily to meet the needs of those seeking to fulfill the requirements of the qualifying and promotional examinations, it was suggested that the Administration might in addition sponsor, from time to time, programs designed to meet the more general professional needs of the staff.

The purpose of such programs would be to promote more vital and efficient library service, and to stimulate professional interest by bringing to the attention of members of the staff new developments, and improved methods and techniques in their various fields.

It was suggested that these programs might eventually be presented in different forms, such as,

1. Courses
2. Institutes
3. Series of lectures by outstanding librarians, and other individuals who have made substantial contributions in their fields that would be applicable to library problems.

In order to provide the maximum stimulus through the introduction of new ideas it was further suggested that it would be desirable that programs be conducted by individuals not in the employment of the Boston Public Library.

Because of the many educational opportunities offered locally it was also agreed that, for the most part, it would be well to limit courses to subjects not touched on by local institutions, or, if so, not adequately keyed to library needs.

Some of the fields in which the Executive Board believes there to be potential staff interest include,

1. Use of audio-visual materials, including programming, sources, physical problems, etc.
2. Supervisory problems
3. Reader guidance, individual and group
4. Refresher courses in subject fields
5. Training discussion leaders
6. Community leadership
7. Book reviewing
8. Publicity, including fundamentals of design, sources, materials, and methods of display, layout, etc.
9. Preparation of reports and articles
10. Book arts

Should these suggestions be considered practicable by the Administration, the Executive Board recommends that the Administration appoint a committee to discover whether sufficient interest exists among members of the staff to launch such a project, and to study the problems involved in these proposals.

Sincerely yours,

Louisa S. Metcalf

President, Boston Public Library
Professional Staff Association

FALL MEETING OF THE B.P.L.P.S.A.

Professor Howard Mumford Jones of Harvard will speak on "The Huckster and the Common Reader" at the fall meeting of the B.P.L.P.S.A., on Saturday evening, November 8th at 8 P.M. All who heard Dr. Jones at the Sunday evening meeting of the New England Library Association at Swampscott know how fortunate we are to have this eminent professor, author, book critic and editor speak to us. If you missed it at Swampscott, here is a repeat performance for the B.P.L.! All members of the Library staff are cordially invited to attend and bring their friends. Refreshments will be served by the Entertainment Committee which consists of Mrs. Geraldine S. Herrick, Misses Rita Desaulniers, Marie Kennedy, Ethel Kimball, Margaret Munsterberg and Ollie Partridge.

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GOVERNOR TO ADDRESS B.P.L.P.S.A.

In a letter dated October 20th, Governor Robert F. Bradford states that he hopes it will be possible to make a "firm engagement" to speak to the B.P.L.P.S.A. sometime in November or December. An announcement of the date will be made as soon as possible after November 10th. This will probably be either a Saturday or preferably a Friday night. Don't make your dates too far ahead and miss the important honor of hearing our Governor.

*

Eva J. Anttonen writes from the Benjamin Franklin Library in Mexico City the following newsy letter:

"... I have just returned from (of all things) the 8th Historical Conference of Mexico! I went more or less as an official representative of the Library--but I (and I think the other 300 delegates from all parts of Mexico and South America) had what I guess is called the time of one's life! We went up to Durango, north of Mexico in the Sierra Madres Occidentales, by way of a specially chartered Pullman train. Upon arriving in the city of Durango, we were all the guests of the Governor for two wonderful weeks, the official dance at the Municipal Palace, picnics or what is called un dia del campo, banquets nearly every other night, etc. Upon the invitation of the Governor, I was invited to visit the rural schools in the mountain districts. We started off beautifully in the Governor's jeep with a very handsome chauffeur ... but within an hour out of the city we reached a river and the bridge was gone (for ages I guess) and so we had to say goodbye to the jeep and from that time on (for five days) I was mostly on horseback! Me! ... If only you could have seen me hanging on as we crossed the river with my clothes hanging on too behind the horse in a pink and purple Oaxaca straw bag! But I had the luck to visit ancient Indian villages nobody ever gets to---These are the Tepehuanes and the Tarahumasas. I adopted a whole little village called San Jose de Gracia. Also I had another exciting experience. An archaeological gentleman who was with us discovered a cave in which we found the remains of a very early civilization. We spent a day digging, finding bits of pre-Aztec pottery, strange bones, etc., even part of a wall with a mural. All this will be eventually examined by the Museum of Anthropology and will be an archaeological site of great importance. But it was great fun to be on the spot when it was first discovered... Enough about my trip, except to say that I landed into the Mexican newsreel. My bangs did not look Mexican at all!

"As to the library, we are now intricately a part of the American Embassy. I have a picture I shall eventually send to you showing some of my children and Ambassador Thurston. Also recently we registered the 4000th child. In honor of this event, I managed to find a magician, a wonderful one who could draw real rabbits out of hats, etc. The children were thrilled. It was just like a Mary Poppins day! I am now up to my neck with Cervantes. This is the 400th anniversary of his birth and of course I am going to celebrate it...

"As to the Library Roof Top Zoo, we have

added many, many new rabbits. And I have a hen that I am supporting. Her name is Melisande and I pay one peso a week for her keep, or rather to keep her out of the pot. She is a very extraordinary hen, most intelligent, everyone says, and also a strange Van Gogh color..."

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CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

It is the intention of the Constitution Committee to submit the following amendments to the Constitution and By-laws to the Association at the November meeting, for its consideration and vote.

Referendum One:
To amend Article III of the Constitution by striking out the words, "There shall be no dues," and substitute "There shall be nominal dues of ten cents per member, per month."

Referendum Two:
To amend Article IV of the Constitution so that it shall read: "The officers of the Association shall be a president, a vice-president, a recording secretary, a corresponding secretary, and a treasurer."

Consequent on which would follow these amendments: Article V of the Constitution must be amended to read: "There shall be an Executive Board consisting of five officers of the Association and four members of the Association."

Article VI of the Constitution which now reads in part: "Three members shall be elected on alternate years for two years" shall be altered to read: "Two members shall be elected on alternate years for two years."

Article I (duties of officers) of the By-laws shall be amended as follows: The whole of section 3 as it now stands shall be struck out and the following substituted: "Article I--section 3a--Recording Secretary.
It shall be the duty of the recording secretary
(1) to keep the minutes of all meetings of the Association and of the Executive Board.
(2) to send to each bibliothecal unit of the service a copy of the minutes of each meeting of the Association.
---section 3b--Corresponding Secretary
It shall be the duty of the corresponding secretary
*(2) to prepare notices of all meetings of the Association, and to send a copy, for posting to each bibliothecal unit of the service at least one week previous to the date set for the meeting."

The Committee would like at this time to call the attention of the membership to the suggestions made by it at the May meeting, concerning the increase of the powers of the Executive Board. A copy is appended below for the benefit of those members who might make preparation to act on these suggestions at the November meeting:

Report of the Committee on Constitution and By-laws

The Committee wishes to report that to date, it has received no suggested revisions or amendments to the Constitution or By-laws.

However, the Committee would like to recommend that the membership take under advisement the question of whether it wishes to alter the By-laws in at least two directions. The Committee wishes this recommendation to be read into the minutes as a recommendation only, not as a proposed By-law or amendment; and it would rather not have the membership take action at this particular meeting (23 May 1947) as there does not seem to be a sufficent number present, but rather, to withhold discussion until the next meeting at which time, the Committee will again bring the matter forward.

To take the simpler matter first, Article III, section 2 (c) of the By-laws reads: "Election of officers shall be determined by plurality of all votes cast." This obviously leaves no provision

* (1) to conduct the correspondence of the Association.

as to what to do in case of a tie vote, as was very nearly the case in the last election in which a margin of one vote separated candidates. The situation of the tie is quite conceivable.

The second point concerns Article II, part (b) of the Revised By-laws, concerning the duties and powers of the Executive Board. It reads: "It shall be the duty of the Executive Board to consider all matters affecting the common interests and welfare of the Association and to recommend to the Association such action as the Board deems wise." Now this limits the power of the Board solely to recommendation, with no power of action. This would seem to be a wise and democratic procedure to reserve the power of action to the membership itself. However, during the recent months in the matter of the Certification and State Aid bills, the Board found itself with its hands tied. When the situation arose, the Board took a poll of the membership to determine if any action was to be taken on the bills, but by the time the poll was counted the situation had changed considerably, leaving the Board as it were "holding the bag". The Board felt tongue-tied and suffered criticism on all sides.

Therefore we recommend that the membership give serious consideration to a possibility of extending Executive Board powers. Since the matter is quite a serious one, we believe that it should not be acted upon hurriedly. Rather we recommend that no discussion take place until next meeting, thus giving the membership the intervening months to mull the recommendation over. Also, since I am a member of the Executive Board (and in this I express the wish of the Board) I would prefer that any action decided upon at the November meeting, be not effective until after next election, as the Board has no desire to leave itself open to charges of nepotism, simony or other crimes against the common good.

Respectfully submitted,
Eamon McDonough
Chairman, Constitution Committee

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RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE STAFF LIBRARY

Colum, Mary. Life and the dream.

Crum, Bartley. Behind the silken curtain.

Fischer, J. Why they behave like Russians.

Hinkson, P. Irish gold.

Hobson, V. Gentleman's agreement.

Keith, A. Three came home.

Kieran, J. Information please almanac.

Lewis, S. Kingsblood Royal.

Jackson, L. Organization and administration of a special library.

Prouty, O. Home port.

Roy, G. Tin flute.

Sartre, J. No exit.

Shaw, G. Nine plays.

Shute, N. Chequer board.

Steinbeck, J. Wayward bus.

Smith, M. Koussevitsky.

Yank. The G.I. story of the war.

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A. KALISH AT AFT CONVENTION

Abraham Kalish, president of Boston Library Local 731, described his work with trade unions at the Boston Public Library in a panel on workers education at the convention of the American Federation of Teachers held in Boston in August.

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BRANCH NOTES

At the registration desk of one of the Branch Libraries, an ex-G.I. and ex-Vermonter was making application for a card. He answered with forbearance the necessary questions: where he lived and with whom, what he did and at what address, whom he knew: He signed his name almost willingly, and then, with a smile that seemed to come suddenly from the south of France, certainly not from Vermont, said, "Now tell me about you..."

*

A word about practical techniques in public relations. Those of us in Branch Libraries can testify to the evidence of an increased birthrate. There are more pre-schoolers than shopping bags, almost. And in the library they like to express themselves: they yammer, yowl, hoot, and even halloo as if in a responsive tunnel. Their mothers, well-read as they are in the 136.7's and 649's, allow them this simple pleasure.

And the Librarians? Shall we condition the impressionable children against Librarians by quieting them, however gently, while Mother looks on, outraged? Or shall we speak to Mother, who either demonstrates her marginal control of the offspring or quite vehemently wishes her young to be without frustrations or refuses to see or hear them at all, in the library. (Mind you, we have wonderful exceptions, some days.)

To illustrate: a young child was busily banging the catalog drawers, to the annoyance of the public, when the Children's Librarian, standing beside the child a while in order not to take him unaware, said, "If you play with the drawers that way, you are going to hurt your fingers." Mother hurried over, bristling, "Let him hurt himself, then he won't do it again!"

There is no conclusion. People and their children are more fun than anybody.

*

Complete compensation is hereby promised those patient assistants who scheduled the use of Webster's Unabridged to all the contest-happy hopefuls yearning to make big peanuts out of little ones. They may read, if they haven't yet, Thurber's "Here Come the Tigers" in the New Yorker, August 23, 1947, p. 23.

P. W.

*

THE SOAP BOX

Dear Editor:

It seems to me that it is time something was done about the petty thievery that has become increasingly prevalent in staff areas of the Central Library of recent months. Accounts of what has been going on are enough to arouse the anger of any decent and honest-minded person. There is something despicable in the knowledge that staff members--both men and women--cannot leave things in the lunch rooms or iceboxes that have been provided for such collective use without having them taken. Every week there is the tale of a lunch being stolen from the men's locker room, a pound of butter, a half-dozen lemons, milk, or other foods being "lifted" from the women's icebox, shoes or rubbers or umbrellas stolen from the locker rooms. It is not always a case of carelessness on the part of the owner. One has to leave umbrellas and rubbers outside of lockers on rainy days, and since iceboxes have been provided for everyone, and they cannot be made with chains or locked compartments, people must be able to bring their food and leave it in one common icebox without fear of having it disappear before noontime.

More important and even more despicable are the reports of pockets being picked periodically on the way to and from the pay line, of bags searched, and money taken on payday. We admit that there is here a certain measure of carelessness in leaving purses lying around; but that

atone for the fact that there are persons (or a person) among us who haven't the decency or honesty to keep their hands off property that doesn't belong to them.

It is bad enough to have food stolen in these days when prices are high and some items are scarce, and to have money disappear from those who have earned it and need it. But infinitely worse is the outrage to the integrity of the staff as a whole. The honor of all of us is being made suspect. The honesty of any society depends upon the honesty of each of its members. When some of those members are perceived to be dishonest, it is up to the group to single those few out and make known to all the unworthiness of this part of the group. By this means alone can society as a whole protect the properties of its members.

I'm sure I am not alone in registering my indignation at the contemptible plunderings of these petty pilferers.

Irate.

*

RECENT MATERIAL OF PROFESSIONAL INTEREST

The September 1 issue of the LIBRARY JOURNAL carries an interesting article by Charles M. Mohrhardt titled Detroit projects new research plan. Briefly it attempts to set up a rational program to guide the Detroit Public Library in its relations with the great industries of the metropolitan area. For many years the exact status and obligations of a public library in relation to the research programs of private business have been the subject of much thought in library circles. These specific proposals will do much to crystallize practice.

Those on the staff whose work or interests dictate a knowledge of reading machines will be interested in Mary A. Bennett's article New Microfilm reading machines (COLLEGE AND RESEARCH LIBRARIES, July 1947, p. 239). It is a short, lucid explanation of the newer types available with statistical data about cost and performance.

And lest our cataloguers be offended, we note the appearance of the preliminary edition of the Rules for descriptive cataloging in the Library of Congress. This 125 page brochure, issued by the appropriate division of L.C. recently, is intended to reflect the best practice in its respective field. With knowledge of the storm which greeted the A.L.A. Catalog Rules (1941), this observer cautiously refrains from any comment other than to express the hope that this "preliminary edition" will very soon lead to another which will be neither "tentative" nor "preliminary".

C. L. H.

An Australian Librarian, Mr. R. M. Reilly, questions some of the current practices of public libraries in a provocative article in the January 1947 issue of the LIBRARY QUARTERLY, Library Evangelism and the Educational Functions of the Public Library. He feels that the indoctrination found in some of the so-called forums and community centers defeats the democratic and literary functions and overlooks the broader and more cultural aspects of our educational responsibilities. The article ends with the challenging words, "Let the Librarian stay a Librarian, and give the people a chance to think."

M. C. K.

*

SWAMPSCOTT NOTE

If time and opportunity had limited one to attending a single session of the New England Library Association Conference at Swampscott, the session "Great responsibilities and great opportunities," speakers, Mr. Brown and Mr. Clapp, would have been a happy choice. Mr. Brown's talk followed the usual form of the well-informed librarian speaking on a very familiar subject and high-lighting his own particular stock-in-trade.

Mr. Brown mentioned a few of the activities on which most libraries are concentrating today and consequently his audience sat back in their chairs very well pleased with themselves and with Mr. Brown.

On the other hand Mr. Clapp placed all the emphasis of his words on a particular library function "Bibliography" because he feels that among most librarians "Bibliography" is the forgotten man. Mr. Clapp possesses excellent platform personality, a good sense of humor, a pleasing voice and remarkable mental alertness. He took his courage in both hands and ventured to tell the assembly how they were failing in their fulfillment of the responsibilities of their profession. "Subject specialists," says Mr. Clapp, "are outranking the librarian in consultations on a classification for special collections". Mr. Clapp further clarified his statement, by explaining that the need is for bibliographies of recent publications rather than for retrospective bibliographies. The sincerity of Mr. Clapp's appeal to direct attention and effort to this phase of librarianship was thought provoking and even inspiring. What librarian wishes to concede that other agencies can better execute the work for which he or she is especially trained?

A. H.

*

CONNOLLY BRANCH

Miss Evelina M. Olivier, Connolly Branch, was retired from the Library on September 30, because of disability due to illness. A dinner party was held in her honor at Novak's Restaurant, Brookline, at which the members of the staff of Connolly Branch Library presented her with a suitcase.

*

The many friends of Palmira Piciulo and Chester Fazakas were delighted at the news of their engagement. We wish many years of happiness to both of you.

*

The editor blushes with shame at having overlooked the arrival on 31 May 1947 of Marie Ann O'Neil, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. B. Joseph O'Neil. We really meant to announce it earlier as we had heard all about it, but in a last minute rush somehow or other the note got filed in with some order cards and not with our Question Mark material.

*

We understand that Mrs. John Hankey (Anne Devlin) is en route to Helsinki to join her husband recently appointed naval attache there.

*

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

The program committee offers these interesting letters from its file for our enjoyment:

"I am most appreciative of your invitation to address an evening meeting of the Boston Public Library Professional Staff Association and regret that I must decline. My calendar for the coming months is crowded and in fairness to the commitments I have made I can not consider any additional speaking engagements at this time.

"With all good wishes for the meetings of your Association, I am

Very sincerely yours,
(signed) James B. Conant

*

"I feel highly honored by your invitation to address the Boston Public Library Professional Staff Association at some meeting this fall and the subject which you suggest is an interesting one.

"Unhappily, my calendar is already filled up for practically the entire

academic year with as many speaking engagements as I can possibly handle and far more than I ought to undertake in view of other duties. I shall therefore have to ask to be excused.

"I am sorry that this has to be the answer.

Very sincerely yours,
(signed) Karl T. Compton"

*

"I am a pig and obviously no librarian. My only excuse has been that I pile my letters on my desk and wait for the big wind. It still is. I'm trying to write. And I have no secretary. And a lot of people who got into the habit of writing me when I had a secretary keep right on. And the result is that I am rude or appear to be so. I hope you will forgive me. I can't possibly make speeches anywhere if I am to get on with what I have to do. But I'm glad you wanted me to come.

Faithfully,
(signed) Archibald MacLeish "

*

PERSONAL NOTES

New Staff Members

Carlotta M. Vitali, Music Department.
Mary Ann Reeves, Science and Technology Department.
A. Gertrude Barry, Personnel Office.
Paul W. Smith, Business Office.
Helen M. Donovan, Jamaica Plain Branch.
Ursula M. VonZarsk, East Boston Branch.
Frances B. O'Brien, Registration Department.
Jeanne L. Fleming, Business Branch.
Elizabeth Burnett, Music Department.
Louis M. Deraney, Science and Technology Department.
Mrs. Cynthia M. Fanjoy, Washington Village Branch.
Mary A. Blute, Mattapan Branch.
Mrs. Frances C. Maguire, West End Branch.
B. Gertrude Wade, City Point Branch.
Sigrid Robinson, Open Shelf Department.
Mrs. Phyllis W. Podren, Brighton Branch.
J. Adele Rogerson, Business Branch.
Mrs. Katherine S. Harris, Science and Technology Department.
Catherine A. LaBonte, Connolly Branch.
Mrs. Joan J. Eickhoff, West End Branch.
Mrs. Suzanne P. Turner, East Boston Branch.

Transfers

Eamon E. McDonough, Cataloging and Classification Department, Reference Division, to General Reference Department.
Mildred Adelson, Brighton Branch to Jamaica Plain Branch.
Katherine M. Kiely, South End Branch to Roslindale Branch.

Marriages and Births

Sonia Greenberg, Business Branch, was married to Harry Tarlin on September 11, 1947.

Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Ja announce the birth of a son, Milton Ja. Mrs. Ja formerly worked in the Director's Office.

Announcement has been made of the engagement of Elizabeth FitzSimmons, Business Branch, to David D. Scannell, Jr.

Mr. and Mrs. Francis Scannell (Mrs. Scannell was the former Mary Donovan) announce the birth of a son Christopher, familiarly known as Kit, born at 6:30 A.M. on Friday the 24th of October.

Members of the staff attending Simmons College, School of Library Science

Martin Waters, History Department.
Esther Leonard, Teachers' Department.
Marie Pineo, Mattapan Branch.
James C. McGillicuddy, Book Stack Service.
Gerald L. Ball, Science and Technology Department.
Helen Savakian, Information Office.
Evelyn Levy, Brighton Branch.
John M. Carroll, General Reference Department.

B. Joseph O'Neil, Periodical and Newspaper Department.

Retirements

Evelina M. Olivier, Connolly Branch, September 30, 1947.

Resignations

Robert M. Blaisdell, Science and Technology Department, to accept a teaching position.

Phyliss Racette, Book Stack Service, to accept another position.

Mrs. Jeanne Delaney Clancy, West End Branch, to remain at home.

Madeline A. Shaw, Book Stack Service.

Mrs. Catherine Cuttle Boyer, West Roxbury Branch, to live in Washington, D. C.

Alice F. Morley, Business Office.

*

B.P.L.P.S.A. FIELD REPRESENTATIVES

The Membership Committee of the B.P.L.P.S.A. announces the appointment of the following members of the staff as field representatives,

THE CENTRAL LIBRARY

1. Statistical, Patent, Periodical and Newspaper
   Frank Bruno, Patent Room
2. Open Shelf, Book Selection, Information
   Ruth Michelson, Book Selection
3. Cataloging and Classification (Reference Division)
   Alice E. Hackett
4. Book Purchasing
   Grace M. Marvin
5. Business Office, Personnel Office
   Samuel Green, Business Office
6. Branch Issue, Cataloging and Classification (Circulation Division), Book Preparation
   Joseph Lynch, Book Preparation
7. Teachers, Young Peoples
   Esther Leonard, Teachers
8. History (and Map), General Reference, Reference Supervisor
   Emilia Lange, General Reference
9. Registration, Book Stack Service
   Ruth A. Foley, Book Stack Service
10. Reference and Circulation Division Executive Offices
    Ruth S. Cannell, Circulation Division Office
11. Science and Technology, Fine Arts
    William DiRosario, Fine Arts
12. Print, Music, Rare Books
    Muriel C. Figenbaum, Print Department
13. Trustee's Office, Director's Office, Records, Files, and Statistics
    Mary F. Nagle, Records, Files, and Statistics

BRANCH LIBRARIES

Allston	Alice M. Buckley
Brighton	Ann Coleman
Business Branch	William Earley
Charlestown	Mary Harris
City Point	Helen O'Leary
Codman Square	Pauline Winnick
Connolly	Ruth Riceman
Dorchester	Margaret Morgan
East Boston	Dorothy Nourse
Faneuil	Florence B. Darling
Fellowes Athenaeum	Gladys White
Hyde Park	Sara Lyon
Jamaica Plain	Irene Tuttle
Jeffries Point	Christiana Jordan
Lower Mills	Mary C. Gilman
Mattapan	Helen Sagoff
Memorial	Vera Lehane
Mt. Bowdoin	Mildred Kaufman
Mt. Pleasant	Etta Lasker
Neponset	Ellen Peterson
North End	Dorothy Becker
Orient Heights	Marie R. Kennedy
Parker Hill	Elizabeth Kernachan
Phillips Brooks	Virginia Haviland
Roslindale	Marion Herzig
School Issue	Irene Wadsworth
South Boston	Ann Connors
South End	Martha C. Engler
Uphams Corner	Taimi E. Liija
Washington Village	Marjorie Gibbons
West End	Nura Globus
West Roxbury	Pauline Walker

*

Friends of Mrs. Edna Langille, former Children's Librarian at Jamaica Plain who retired in June 1947, will be interested to know that she is sojourning in St. Petersburg, Florida, where she and her husband will have an apartment until June.

While most of her time is spent swimming, daily, at sandy beaches, white as powdered sugar, and enjoying Florida sunshine and soft breezes from the Gulf of Mexico, she still has had time to check on the library situation, and sends the following items.

St. Petersburg's main library is a beautiful building, surrounded by palm trees and well-cared-for grounds. The children's room is on the first floor, and has the advantage of an entirely separate entrance. All library employees are on Civil Service.

For the most part, the clientele are elderly retired people, keen and intelligent. Members of the staff are glad to give them personalized service, such as finding their glasses and reading difficult fine print for them. A non-resident may get a card for two dollars, which is refunded when the borrower leaves. This entitles him to take six books for two weeks.

Mrs. Langille still affirms, however, that there is no place like the good old B.P.L.

*

We STAY-AT-HOMERS are not as sorry for ourselves now as we were in June when the LUCKY 26 left for adventures in the West!

Thanks for giving us such a "super" party--serving us so much delicious food, sharing with us beautiful pictures of the places you visited, and showering us with friendly hospitality.

We loved it!

THE QUESTION MARK

Published by the Boston Public Library Professional Staff Association

Vol. II November-December 1947 No. 9

EDITORS CORNER

As members of the staff on one of the largest public libraries in the country, with a budget which permits our giving good, if not perfect, service to the community, the need for state aid to libraries may not be immediately apparent to some of us. When we think, however, of the comparative inadequacy of the service in some other communities, the work of the Conference on State Aid for Libraries in Massachusetts assumes an importance which makes it merit our support.

Governor Bradford's remarks in his address to the Legislature May 5, 1947 (Senate 569) emphasize the need for equalization of state aid--the principle of providing help where help is needed--a principle which Massachusetts has practically ignored. Education is one of the fields in which such assistance must be given, according to the Governor. We as librarians realize the educational importance of adequate library service. To quote Governor Bradford: "I know of no other state in the union which has done less than Massachusetts in recognizing the responsibility of those who live in the wealthier communities to the people of the poorer ones.

"I am well aware that equalization is seldom a popular issue. Yet it is an obligation to point out to you the Commonwealth's vital concern with the less privileged communities... Our citizens and taxpayers must realize that the high valuation municipalities owe the same obligation to the low valuation cities and towns that the prosperous sections of any community are already contributing to the poorer sections of the same community. It is the grimy industrial area which makes possible the rich and beautiful suburb."

It is our duty as librarians to see that adequate library service, as an aspect of proper educational facilities, be provided on a more equal basis throughout the state. SUPPORT THE CONFERENCE ON STATE AID FOR LIBRARIES IN MASSACHUSETTS!

*

PERSONAL NOTES

New Staff Members

Louise M. Vogelhuber, Reference Division Office.
Esther R. Smith, North End Branch.
Alberta M. Renzaglia, Business Branch.
Grace M. Lynch, Mr. Quinn's Office.
Katherine T. Melavin, Business Office.
Mary T. Savage, West Roxbury.
Rita M. Doherty, Book Stack Service.
Mary J. Azadian, Book Stack Service.
Clarinda A. Lawson, Science and Technology Department.
Jean W. Armstrong, Book Purchasing Department.
Jean A. Horton, Roslindale Branch.
Dorothy W. Ransom, Mattapan Branch.
Rita E. Susi, North End Branch.
Claire M. Smith, Book Purchasing Department.
Lois Shoemaker, History Department.

Returned from Military Service

Sidney Weinberg, General Reference Department.

Re-entered Service

Leontine M. Milano, Cataloging and Classification Department, Reference Div.
Bertha S. Smith, Business Branch.

Transfers

Mary A. Blute, from Mattapan Branch to Brighton Branch.

Corona Groves, from Memorial Branch to Mount Bowdoin Branch.
Duilia Capobianco, from North End Branch to Connolly Branch.
F. Laurelle West, from West Roxbury Branch to Phillips Brooks Branch.

Ceased Service

Alice F. Morley, Business Office.
Sonia G. Tarlin, Business Branch.
Jeanne L. Fleming, Business Branch.
Beatrice G. Morrissey, Parker Hill Branch.
Mary Q. Smith, Book Stack Service.

Retirements

Edith H. Bailey, Phillips Brooks Branch.
Marion M. Ellis, Jamaica Plain Branch, because of ill health.

Married

Elizabeth FitzSimmons, Business Branch, was married to David D. Scannell, Jr., on Saturday November 29, 1947.

B.P.L. Represented in "Library Journal" for November 1947:

Leonard Burkat appointed librarian, Berkshire Music Center, Lenox, Massachusetts effective October 1, 1947. See page 1612.

John M. Carroll under News Round-up (p. 1588) - comments on paper written at Simmons on "Modern State Aid to Library Programs in Relation to Massachusetts."

New Arrivals

Twin daughters were born November 26, 1947 to Mr. and Mrs. William P. Clancy. Mrs. Clancy was Jean Delaney, in charge of Work with Children at the West End Branch.

Mr. and Mrs. Stanley J. Brooks announced the arrival of a son, Robert Stanley, on October 28, 1947. Mrs. Brooks was Catherine Fraleigh, in charge of Work with Children at the Codman Square Branch Library.

Library School Graduate

Ruth Williamson, History Department, received her B.L.S. from Columbia University, at the end of the 1947 summer session.

*

MRS. DIETRICHSON

On Monday evening, December 1, 1947, an informal dinner was held at the Harvard Faculty Club in recognition of Mrs. Mary Watkins Dietrichson's retirement as Business Branch Librarian. The present staff of the Business Branch was joined by former BB staff members and by those persons at the Central Library with whom Mrs. Dietrichson has been associated during the years. There was a total of forty-four in attendance.

Those former staff members and associates who were unable to be present sent messages and greetings which will be mounted in a scrapbook for Mrs. Dietrichson. This will also contain the signatures of all those who were present plus photographs and snapshots of the children of former staff members. A very beautiful purse of lizard skin was presented to Mrs. Dietrichson for which she responded very graciously and sincerely. The remainder of the evening was devoted to visiting and chatting and provided a most welcome opportunity for renewing friendships and catching up on "alumni news."

Mrs. Dietrichson has been in library work for thirty-five years -- the past thirty-one years in business libraries. She organized the Minneapolis Business Branch in 1916 and remained there until 1927 when she came east. The following year she spent at the Harvard Business School Library and then became Chief of the Statistical Department, 1926-1930. In 1930, she organized the Business Branch and has directed its growth and development since that time. Her resignation becomes effective December 31, 1947, but she will be on vacation after December 2.

For Mrs. Dietrichson during her years of retirement we wish continued and ever-increasing happiness and a life enjoyed to its fullest.

*

RECENT PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE

Read the New Program at the University of Denver by Harriet E. Howe (referring to the experiment in library training being undertaken there) in the November, 1947, ALA BULLETIN. It describes a new approach to library education and deserves study.

And while it is not professional material, we cannot urge too strongly that everyone read To Secure These Rights. This is the report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights published recently by the GPO and Simon and Schuster at $1.00. It is basic to an understanding of the minority problem in this country.

Miss Edna Mae Brown has written a short article on New Periodicals of 1947-Part I. in the October issue of COLLEGE AND RESEARCH LIBRARIES. Miss Brown provides a more readable account of activity in this field than is available elsewhere.

Some of you may have missed the exchange of letters anent library purchase of best-seller fiction printed in the November 8, 1947 issue of SRL in the Letters to the Editor section (p.22). Short and interesting.

Among the many excellent articles in the July, 1947, issue of LIBRARY QUARTERLY is one entitled The Reorganization of the Book Trade in Germany by Felix Reichmann. This is a vivid picture of the suffocation of the pre-war German book trade, and the innumerable difficulties hindering its rebirth.

C. L. H.

*

THEATRE NIGHT

The B.P.L.P.S.A. will have a theatre night on Friday January 16th to see the "Doll's House" by Ibsen, at the Tributary Theater. The first ten rows of seats in the balcony have been reserved for us. These one hundred seats, priced at $1.20, will each net our treasury $.50. Please make your reservations now with your staff representative. The money will be collected in January when the tickets are delivered. Plan now for an evening of good entertainment, good theatre and good profit both for you and the Association.

*

RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE STAFF LIBRARY

Ditzion, Sidney H. Arsenals of a democratic culture.

Green, Samuel S. The public library movement in the United States.

Hanley, Edna R. College and university library building.

Hirshberg, Herbert S. Subject guide to government documents.

Lowe, John Adams. Small public library buildings.

Mahony, Bertha E., and others, comps. Illustrators of children's books.

Moshier, L. Marion. The small public library; organization, administration, service.

U.S. Library of Congress. Descriptive cataloging division. Cooperative cataloging manual.

Wheeler, Joseph L. The American public library building.

Anderson, Sherwood. Winesburg, Ohio.

Bodley, R. V. C. The quest.

Commission on freedom of the press. A free and responsible press.

Costain, Thomas. The moneyman.

Dreiser, Theodore. Sister Carrie.

Guthrie, A. B. The big sky.

Hemingway, Ernest. Farewell to arms.

Hirshberg, Al. Red Sox, the bean and the cod.

Lancaster, Bruce. Scarlet patch.

Lewisohn, Ludwig. Case of Mr. Crump.

Lieb, Frederick. Boston Red Sox.

Look. New England.

Mann, Thomas. Essays of three decades.

Maugham, W. Somerset. Creatures of circumstance.

Northrop, F. S. C. Meeting of East and West.

Parrington, Vernon. Main Currents of American thought.

Paul, Elliot. Linden on the Saugus branch.

Robinson, Henry M. Great Snow.

Shellabarger, Samuel. Prince of foxes.

Wertenbaker, Charles. Write sorrow on the earth.

Williams, Ben Ames. House divided.

*

Bennett Cerf tells the following tale in the SRL for December 6: "Kenneth Roberts, writes John H. Treanor, was scheduled to give a lecture in the auditorium of the Boston Public Library one evening last winter. When the night arrived, there was a moderate snowstorm in progress. About five o'clock he phoned the library from his home in Maine and said that because of the storm he would have to cancel the engagement. 'What!' exclaimed the librarian, 'The man who wrote 'Northwest Passage' can't brave two inches of snow?' Mr. Roberts kept the appointment..."

*

On November 29th Miss Betty FitzSimmons of the Business Branch became the bride of David Scannell at a Nuptial Mass at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, Jamaica Plain. She had as her attendant her sister, Miss Jean FitzSimmons. The wedding was followed by a reception for the immediate families of the bride and groom. After their honeymoon at Sea Island, Georgia, Mr. and Mrs. Scannell will live at Park Drive in Boston.

*

THE SOAP BOX

To the President of the Boston Public Library Professional Staff Association:

I heartily favor the expansion of the library's in-service training program, as outlined in the October "Question Mark".

In addition, I would like to have "programs designed to meet the more general professional needs of the staff" presented at the alternate evening meetings, instead of the social meetings. In this way, the Association would reach a larger audience. Because of the many opportunities in Boston to hear nationally known speakers on all kinds of subjects, I think it is more pertinent for the Association to present programs on library science. Perhaps the librarians who have spoken at the M.L.A. or A.L.A. meetings could give the same address to the B.P.L. Personally, I would rather hear Miss Day of Lynn, Miss Meade of Winchester, or Miss Hyatt of Fitchburg speak on a specific phase of library work, than a nationally known figure speak on a subject distantly related to library science.

In regard to the report of the Committee on the Personnel Rating Sheet, I hope that the report will state the various reasons why the Committee believes a personnel rating is beneficial to the employees and to the library service. I think a digest of the Committee's study would be enlightening to the many members, who, at present, favor abandoning the rating procedure. In fact, if the report should fail to convince a large majority of the employees of the desirability of a personnel rating, then perhaps the Staff Association could devote an evening meeting for additional information and discussion. Here again, perhaps, librarians outside of the B.P.L. would be helpful.

Sincerely yours,
Helen F. Hirson
West Roxbury Branch.

*

MISS GOLDSTEIN

On Saturday, November 1, Miss Fanny Goldstein celebrated her 25th anniversary as librarian of the West End Branch. The occasion was marked by a luncheon in her honor, complete with a silver jubilee cake and flowers, given by members of the staff, past and present. Flowers, telegrams and cards kept arriving all afternoon from her many friends in Boston and in other parts of the country, and indeed the congratulatory messages have not stopped coming yet.

*

A LETTER FROM GOVERNOR BRADFORD

November 26, 1947

Dear Miss Nourse,

I am sorry that the pressure of State business in December, just previous to the opening of the new session of the Legislature, has made it necessary for me to cut my outside schedule to an absolute minimum.

The entire month -- including evenings as well as the hours of the usual business day -- will be almost fully occupied with the necessary conferences, previous to the opening of the new Legislature, that must be held with scores of Department Heads and Commission Chairmen.

For this reason, I regret that I will be unable to accept your kind invitation to speak to the Boston Public Library Staff Association in December.

Sincerely yours,

Robert F. Bradford (signature)

*

REPORT OF THE CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

The committee wishes to report that up to the present time it has received no proposals for amendments from the membership at large. However, acting on the suggestion of the executive board, the committee has prepared two amendments which it is the committee's intention to propose in the order of new business.

As was announced in the Question Mark, these amendments are concerned (1) with the creation of a new officer, to be known as a corresponding secretary and (2) with a proposal for placing a dues on membership. This last is, we realize, a course of action distasteful to all, nevertheless, it is a prospect that must be faced. Our present financial situation is far from stable. We have no regular source of income. In lieu of any other solution for meeting current expenses, this matter of dues is being proposed.

As to the suggestions in our previous report about increasing the powers of the executive board and altering the method of determining election, no flood of proposals has come streaming in to the committee. Since we do not wish to undertake the initiative in such a matter, the committee will pursue the subject no further.

Respectfully submitted,
The Constitution Committee
Eamon McDonough, Chairman.

*

STAFF LIBRARY BOOK RECOMMENDATION COMMITTEE

The Staff Library Book Recommendation Committee has met once a month except in July and August.

In recent months there has arisen some question as to the suitability of certain books being selected for the Staff Library. For instance: there has been doubt as to the advisability of building up the collection by the addition of classics; there has been honest doubt as to the need for certain titles which were not clearly in the realm of recreational reading. In order to have definite information upon which to base the selection, it was decided to poll the staff in an attempt to ascertain what the members really want. The results are extremely interesting and appear to confirm the impressions of the Committee, although the information has not yet been tabulated and studied. When this has been done, conclusions will be announced.

A recent inquiry concerning the outcome of the suggestion to substitute a metal grill or glass doors for the locked case containing "starred" books brought a prompt reply from Mrs. Wright that glass doors will soon be installed.

The matter of a printed, up-to-date list of all the books in the Staff Library is again being investigated, but no decision has been reached.

Since January 1, 1947, books to the value of $344.00 have been added to the library, while those still on order amount to $165.00.

Respectfully submitted,
Geraldine Altman
Chairman, Staff Library Book Recommendation Committee

*

FICTION MISSING FROM THE STAFF LIBRARY AS OF 1 DECEMBER 1947

Bottome, Phyllis. Mortal storm.

Bristow, Gwen. Handsome road.

Bronte, Emily. Wuthering heights.

Buck, Pearl. Dragon seed.

Buck, Pearl. Today and forever.

Cather, Willa. Shadows on the rock.

Davenport, Marcia. Valley of decision.

Douglas, Lloyd. The robe.

Du Maurier, Daphne. Frenchman's creek.

Du Maurier, Daphne. King's general.

Du Maurier, Daphne. Rebecca.

Freedman, Benedict, and Nancy Freedman. Mrs. Mike.

French, Joseph L., ed. Detective stories.

Innes, Michael. Unsuspected chasm.

Marsh, George. Ask no quarter.

Maugham, W. Somerset. Of human bondage.

Mitchell, Margaret. Gone with the wind.

Nicholson, Meredith. House of a thousand candles.

Nordhoff, Charles B., and J. N. Hall. High Barbaree.

Rawlings, Marjorie. The yearling.

Shellabarger, Samuel. Captain from Castile.

Shute, Nevil. Chequer board.

Walpole, Horace. Castle of Otranto.

Welles, Winifred. Lost landscape.

IF ANYONE KNOWS THE WHEREABOUTS OF ANY OF THESE TITLES BELONGING TO THE STAFF LIBRARY, WILL HE PLEASE RETURN THEM TO THE STAFF LIBRARY!

*

NEWS ITEMS FROM CONNOLLY BRANCH

The children of the Connolly Branch district were the guests of the Jamaica Plain Women's Club at a Christmas party held at the branch on Monday afternoon December 22. Each of the 217 children who attended the party were given a gift by Santa Claus (in person) and were provided with bags of candy and ice cream. Mickey Palmer's orchestra played Christmas carols and children's songs which added to the merriment. Arrangements for the party were made by Miss Margaret Calnan, Branch Librarian, and Miss Ruth Riceman, in charge of Children's Work at the branch.

*

The Connolly Branch Library held its annual staff Christmas party on Saturday afternoon, December 20, in the lecture hall of the Branch. Among those present were 3 staff members who recently left the library's service: Miss Evelina Olivier, Mrs. Anne Murray, and Mrs. Janet Langendoen. Each of the guests, which included the custodian and the extras as well as "regular" staff members, agreed that it

was the gayest staff party to date... and the food was delicious!

*

Mrs. Jean Ann Horton of Roslindale Branch, temporarily at Connolly, will leave for New York on December 24, to spend the Christmas holidays with her family. Miss Ruth Riceman, Connolly Branch, will spend the Christmas holidays in New York City.

*

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Nominating Committee of the Boston Public Library Professional Staff Association has had a very discouraging response in its quest for nominees for the titular offices of the Association. A great number of members have been asked, but they have refused because of outside work, school, or membership on other committees. A representative number of nominees in the Branches have also been asked. Members accepting nominations have been most cooperative. The Nominating Committee respectfully submits the following list of nominees:

President:
Charles L. Higgins, General Reference Department.
Eamon E. McDonough, General Reference Department.

Vice-President:
Julia M. Manning, Rare Book Department.
Evelyn B. Marden, Charlestown Branch.
B. Joseph O'Neil, Periodical and Newspaper Department.

Secretary:
Dorothy P. Shaw, Periodical and Newspaper Department.
Ruth I. Williamson, History Department.

Treasurer:
Ruth Hayes, Uphams Corner Branch.
Beatrice Palmer, Dorchester Branch.
Leonard Macmillan, Book Purchasing Department.

Executive Board:
Mary D. Farrell, Cataloging and Classification, Reference Division.
Geraldine S. Herrick, North End Branch.
Helen Lambert, South End Branch.
Catherine MacDonald, Personnel Office.
Mary Mannix, Parker Hill Branch.
Helen Sagoff, Mattapan Branch.

Each of the nominees has signified his willingness to accept the nomination and to serve if elected.

Very truly yours,
Esther J. Leonard,
Chairman, Nominating Committee.

*

I N D E X

Volume II--1947

Key:

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ALA	American Library Association
BPL	Boston Public Library
BPLEBA	Boston Public Library Employees' Benefit Association, Inc.
BPLEU	Boston Public Library Employees' Union, Local 731
BPLPSA	Boston Public Library Professional Staff Association
MLA	Massachusetts Library Association
NELA	New England Library Association
SLA	Special Libraries Association

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